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Alfa

THE DAILY Gnome

The Dangers Of Vigilantism

THIS PAPER deplores the attempts to pander to the lynch-mob in the wake of the hysteria surrounding the release of the Bulger killers.

Whatever one feels about these two young men, and we all of us share a sense of revulsion and horror at their disgusting early release into a life of state-subsidised luxury, it is the mark of a civilised society to release offenders once they have paid their debt to society.

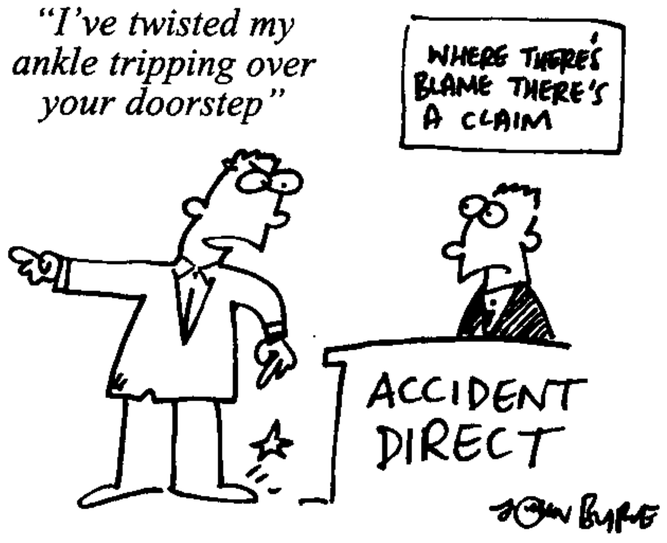
However, we also respect the feelings of those friends, relatives, readers of this paper and white-van-drivers who at this very minute are motivated by nothing more than a natural desire to see real justice done by whatever means, however violent.

We could not, of course, condone publishing the whereabouts of the two killers, although the details can easily be found on www.vigilante.co.uk.

And we would never encourage any angry mob to seek out, surround and then hang the two murderers until they are dead.

God have mercy on their souls. And good hunting.

"I've twisted my ankle tripping over your doorstep"



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ABC

Always a good bet!

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THOSE HONOURS IN FULL

AS THE Queen's birthday honours demonstrated, one of the most honourable activities known to "new" Labour is... making weapons.

Susan Crouch, managing director of Spearhead Exhibitions, got an MBE for "services to export". The exports in questions are arms, as Speearhead arranges international arms fairs – including the jolly-sounding Global Law Enforcement conference and the Defence Systems and Equipment International (DSEi) beano featured in the last *Eye* (at which illegal Romanian mines were on sale).

Nick Prest, chairman and chief executive of Alvis, purveyor of fine armoured cars to the enlightened regimes in Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey, got a CBE. John Widdrington, a business manager for tank and warship maker Vickers, an OBE. And Charles Ruffles of Rolls Royce was given a CBE for "services to defence".

Graham Webster and Bernard Feehan, respectively a director and electronics specialist from French arms firm Thales both got MBEs. British Aerospace also bagged two MBEs: one for Derek Hartley, a project leader; and one for Robert Gardner, the vice-president who arranges "exhibitions and promotions". His sterling work in trying to flog over-priced Hawk jets to India (and thereby into the middle of a dangerous arms race with Pakistan) more than justifies the award.

Chemicals firm Epichem is involved in many projects – including making greener, less polluting batteries. But it also supplies military chemicals – hence md Albert Leese's OBE "for services to the defence industry". Meanwhile David Ryding, of Marshal Aerospace, and Mike Flewin, an executive from warship builder Vosper Thorneycroft, both received MBEs for supplying the MoD and Middle East with killing kit.

Two awards may worry the residents of Plymouth: Tony Pryor, chairman of Devonport Management Ltd, got a CBE; and Malcolm Sanders, a refit manager for the same firm, won an MBE. Devonport Management, the private, US-owned outfit which runs the navy's nuclear submarine dock near Plymouth has just asked the government if it can increase its release of radioactive Tritium into the River Tamar by 500 percent. If these honours are a clue, it looks like the answer is going to be yes.

THE most extraordinary award though was the MBE for Gareth Jones, Wessex Water's environmental director. Wessex's public record on the environment is... well, it's grim.

A week before the MBE the company was fined £6,598 for pouring raw sewage into a Dorset stream. The month before that Wessex was fined £2,425 for pouring raw sewage into the River Avon. Back in January Wessex was also fined £1,800 by magistrates after – guess what – it poured crude sewage into the River Avon.

Last July it was diesel. Wessex was fined £5,350 for pouring 9,000 litres of fuel oil into groundwater from its Wimborne sewage works.

Just one month previously, in May 2000, Wessex had been fined £10,300 after letting effluent from its sewage plant coat a Somerset river with sewage fungus. And in May of the previous year Wessex had to pay another £3,250 in fines after poisoning fish in Bitham Brook with ammonia-filled sewage discharges.

In 1998 Wessex was number four in the Environment Agency's "league of shame", a table of the highest fines dished out to UK firms. It had been forced to pay £36,500 for pollution offences. All in all, then, Gareth Jones has been awarded an MBE for pouring shit and filth over the South West.

TWO issues in particular have enraged the opponents of the multinational corporations: the attitude of the drugs companies to Africa and the "liberalisation" of world trade which forces privatisation on independent countries. Tony Blair clearly thought about both when drawing up the "Companions of the Order of St Michael And St George" in the honours' list.

While most people will have been dismayed by the drug companies' attempts to stop cheap Aids and other drugs being sold in South Africa, Blair was on the companies' side. First up for a gong was Paul Barrett, international director and vice-president for Africa, of top drugs firm Smithkline Beecham, now GlaxoSmithKline, the firm which led the failed legal action against South Africa.

While more than 200 Labour backbenchers have signed a motion criticising the general agreement for trade in services (GATS), which will force Britain to open its public "services", like schools, hospitals and postal services to international "competition" and forced privatisation, Blair honoured one of the main backers of GATS. David Hartridge, retiring director of the services division of the World Trade Organisation. He becomes a Companion too.

CAN the Philippa Drew, highflying civil servant at the department of fun (*Culture, Media and Sport, shurely? Ed.*) who has just been awarded a CB, be the same Philippa Drew, late of the home office?

There, as head of prison security, she presided over the country's worst prison break-out – the escape of gun-toting IRA prisoners from Whitemoor top security unit.

"It's the new Sports Minister"

NEWS

SITTING A-level exams is stressful at the best of times, but conditions endured by students at New College Nottingham must set some kind of record.

Managers at Britain's biggest further education college planned so poorly for the exam season that students arriving to sit their A and AS levels were sent to hastily booked venues across the city, including community centres and even a Baptist church.

So far, so bad. Worse was in store, though, for those who had to take their exams in the bar of Nottingham's Polish Community Centre. They could only gawp incredulously as strangers tiptoed past their makeshift desks… to order drinks!

The college – the dominion of the *Eye*'s old chum, principal Dame Pat Morgan-Webb – blamed the exam boards. But tutors who had to escort tearful students to exams and beg invigilators to let them in, suspect Dame Pat's managers, who failed to schedule exams for which the dates and times were known six months ago, deserve some of the credit too.

AS FAR as the nuclear generating company British Energy (BE) is concerned the most important appointment in the post-election ministerial reshuffle was that of the new DTI energy minister with responsibility for the nuclear sector, oil and gas, Brian Wilson.

Earlier this month BE suffered an embarrassing 95 percent profits meltdown and sacked its chief executive, Peter Hollins. It is therefore a matter of the utmost importance to BE chairman Robin Jeffrey that the new energy minister looks favourably on the company's plea to be allowed to build new nuclear plants across the country.

When Jeffrey lobbies him on the subject, Wilson will surely not be swayed by the fact that as MP for Cunninghame North his constituency includes British Energy's Hunterston B nuclear power plant?

ONE highlight of any possible prosecution of Slobodan Milosevic for war crimes will be the opportunity for a court in The Hague to examine the role played by former Conservative foreign secretary Douglas Hurd and his chums keeping the mass- murderer in business.

Back in 1996 Hurd was a roving ambassador for NatWest Markets. As a "key player" he personally clinched a deal with Slobo to privatise Serbia's telephone system, explaining to horrified critics that "economic and political reform must go hand in hand". Political reform was so successful, of course, that thousands of planes had to bomb the system to atoms to convince Milosevic to get his murderers out of Kosovo.

Back in 1993 it was foreign secretary Hurd who opposed UN military intervention to stop Milosevic slaughtering Bosnians – even though "at first sight it seems an act of justice". His faith in "a level playing field" ensured the beginning of the very bloodbath that Slobo may at last have to answer for.

And it was Hurd's foreign office friend Dame Pauline Neville-Jones who months after leading the Dayton peace talks joined NatWest Markets, raking in a $10m fee for managing the tyrant's huge national debt.

The Morgue
(NOW UNDER NEW FOOD MANAGEMENT)
Templeogue Inn, Templeogue Village.
Southside People, Dublin

Street of Shame

HOW touching that *Sun* editor David Yelland should quote Shakespeare in an editorial that tried gallantly to quell the "klaxon sounds of the lynch mob" following the release of Jon Venables and Robert Thompson.

Touching because the one making all the noise – "tough Merseysiders… would tear Venables and Thompson limb from limb if they could find them" – was none other than his colleague Rebekah "Vigilante" Wade, editor of his sister rag at Wapping, the *News of the World*.

WHAT lay behind the Murdoch newspapers' energetic response to Ireland's referendum vote going against the Treaty of Nice?

According to the *Sunday Times*: "Ireland's referendum against the Treaty of Nice, which prepares the next stage of a wider federal union, exposes the absurdity of the dream of rivalling America as a superpower... It was Europe's public displeasure at Dublin's dynamic tax regime that largely sparked this Irish revolt. It should leave well alone in future."

Though the words were echoed by leader writers in the *Times* and *Sun*, the referendum result had more than a little to do with a desire to keep out immigrants. But News Corporation has its own reasons for taking a contrary view. Three presses are currently being shipped from Germany to a new News Corp plant being built at Kells, County Meath.

This will print Ulster and Irish editions of News International (the UK subsidiary of News Corp) titles currently contract-printed in Belfast or flown in from the Murdoch plant in Liverpool. Surplus capacity at Kells will also enable News to print some English and Scottish editions in Ireland and fly them across the water, reducing the need to upgrade facilities at Wapping or on Merseyside.

Naturally News – which already pays virtually no corporation tax worldwide – will benefit from the existing regime which sees Bill Gates pay just 10 percent to the Irish government for producing his software there, while a humble Dublin pensioner pays twice that in VAT.

As well as paying the low tax rate on Irish sales, the ability to import and export opens up exciting opportunities for transfer pricing.

The Irish operation will be able to bill its UK parent company for services rendered, thus transferring profits generated in London, Cardiff or Edinburgh to the lower tax regime in Dublin. Continuing praise of Ireland's tax breaks in all News Corp titles can confidently be predicted.

PRESIDENT BUSH ARRIVES IN MADRID

HOW was it, asked John Plender, writing about the collapse of Independent Insurance in the *Financial Times* on 20 June, that so many "clear warning signs" of overexposure and entrepreneurial bragging had been missed?

How was it indeed. As Plender pointed out, Independent and its buccaneering boss Michael Bright had picked up "many industry prizes". And in 1997 one had drawn a tremendous accolade. "In the 10 years since it was formed, Independent has taken the sleepy world of commercial insurance by storm… Floated on the stock market in 1993… soared in value to more than £480m…" etc, etc.

The tone of admiration shown by Christopher Adams, insurance correspondent of no lesser journal than the *Financial Times*, was later adopted by colleagues who referred to Independent incessantly, and almost always uncritically, as "the fast-growing commercial lines insurer". In March 1999, the FT's much-advertised "comment" declared: "The market liked these numbers and the upbeat note struck by Mr Bright. Given tough trading conditions, the company had an exceptionally good year in its commercial lines businesses."

It was no doubt these qualities that as early as 1996 had earned for Independent the much-prized PLC award Company of the Year, and for Mr Bright the even more coveted encomium Entrepreneur of the Year. The awards were sponsored by PriceWaterhouseCoopers in association with the London Stock Exchange and, er, the *FT*.

"Doreen's got a marvellous idea for encouraging the tourists back!"

MEANWHILE the *FT*'s fondness for the PR departments of large companies has attained worrying proportions.

In May the *FT* featured a *Hello*-style interview with the chief executive of Singapore International Airlines (SIA), Mr Cheong Choong Kong. The article was not written by one of the *FT's* aviation staff, who surely wouldn't have repeated the old line that the SIA plane crash in Taiwan last year was the company's first fatal accident?

In November 1999 the *Eye* told the story of a Boeing 737 that crashed in December 1997 killing 104 people (see *Eye 990*). The plane was operated by SilkAir, a wholly-owned subsidiary of SIA, which was forced to issue a statement admitting that the aircraft "might have been brought down deliberately by human action". Despite considerable evidence that the pilot, Tsu Way Ming, a Singaporean hero and former fighter pilot with the Singapore air force, was heavily in debt and had been subject to complaints of cavalier flying, rumours were spread throughout SIA that his co-pilot, a 23-year-old New Zealander, had AIDS.

At various press conferences SIA has been forced to admit that it has had three accidents, including one on a training flight as well as the SilkAir and Taiwan crashes. Mr Cheong and his people obviously felt no need to bother with this statement in his interview with the *FT*. When one angry punter wrote a letter to the editor, Richard Lambert, to point this out, he received an arrogant reply stating: "After careful reflection I have concluded that our readers were not misled by our original report and so I have decided not to correc it."

THE farewell note of the man at the helm of the *Independent's* piss-poor Pandora diary column, John Davison, who is off to seek his fortune elsewhere, was a series of attacks on the Tory parliamentary candidate for Birmingham Edgbaston, Nigel Hastilow.

Readers of the *Indescribably Boring* may have wondered why Pandora, which gloated loudly over Hastilow's defeat at the hands of sitting Labour MP Gisela Stuart and claimed to have had considerable influence in the result, has been so hung up on this marginal story.

Surely the abundance at the *Indy* of former hacks from the *Birmingham Post* where, until recently, Hastilow was editor (they include news editor Adam Leigh, nephew of the editor Simon Kelner, and Leigh's wife, *Indy* hackette Kate Watson-Smyth), has had no influence on Pandora's anti-Hastilow campaign?

O·B·N

David Beckham belongs to a different category. He is not only a divine illusion of the media – his rippled stomach glistening for *The Face*'s studio shoot, his mohican haircut heightening the aspect of a noble savage – he also has a godlike skill. Even uninitiates of British football will experience a swoon of awe at a Becks free kick... The bloodlike sauce dribbling down his magnificent Apollonian physique in *The Face* is no lazy contrivance of the popular press. There is a pagan darkness to the eyes.

ALEXANDER LINKLATER
The Times

Nominated by APR

£10 paid for entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

"Hello? It's me, I'm on the toilet"

AN exposé of Greek "rust-bucket" ferries on the front of the *Telegraph* travel section on 9 June, almost a year after the Express Samina sank killing 82 people, makes grim reading.

The article was backed by quotes from the author of the Thomas Cook guide to *Greek Island Hopping 2000*, Frewin Poffley, whose opinion of the Samina written in advance of the tragedy was horribly prescient: "Now reaching the 35-year Greek ferry age limit and due for replacement, this dreadful boat is arguably the worst Greek ferry afloat."

The report also quoted from Poffley's web site, *greekislandhopping.com*, which warns that there are at least three ferries holidaymakers should avoid "based on their poor internal layouts or safety records". So it is surprising to read a second article on Greek ferries on page five of the same travel section which describes island hopping as "plain sailing", and provides comprehensive information on how to plan a trip with no mention of any safety hazards, penned by one... Frewin Poffley.

HACKWATCH

Almaballs

WITH the election over Fleet Street is breathing a collective sigh of relief. No longer do newspapers have to waste money sending hacks far and wide to report real stories of genuine public interest. Instead, 8 June found staff writers returning to the much more serious business of filling space on the cheap with stories about telly.

Last week's biggest news, as predicted months ago in all papers everywhere, was the sad demise of *Coronation Street's* Alma Halliwell, who saved several editors' bacon by opting to die of cervical cancer in the episode of Sunday 17 June.

The Friday before this national tragedy, the *Sun* was beginning to rouse itself into its usual amalgam of heartfelt grief and pent-up fury, with the "heartbreaking" pic we'd all been waiting for – Alma on her deathbed. Chock-a-block with useful facts, the *Sun* still found space to list every one of the characters at Alma's bedside, along with every one of their real-life names. Plus a deep and meaningful quote from an unnamed "ITV insider": "It was truly devastating for them all to watch her go like this."

By the weekend of the (entirely fictional) event, plenty of other newspapers had begun to rouse themselves to an appropriate level of space-filling anguish. The *News of the World* managed to dig up another "heartrending" fuzzy pic, complete with several paragraphs of the requisite sentimental drivel: "Mike Baldwin's granite face crumbles in grief as Audrey Robert's scatters Alma's ashes."

But even though Alma had not actually died yet, the tabloid two-minute attention-span meant the focus began to turn to Alma's actress Amanda Barrie, who, like many luvvies, is probably not as interesting as the character she portrays. No matter. The red-tops were on a roll, and by Sunday the *Mirror* had dug up an "exclusive" two-page splash complete with the now mandatory young Amanda pic, death-bed Amanda/Alma pic, Amanda with dog etc. In the course of the interview Alma, or was it Amanda, revealed the story of her hysterectomy 15 years ago: "The worst thing – something they never tell you – is wind" she enlightened the nation. Ruki Sayid's astonishing exclusive, we later learned, had already appeared in full in *Hello!*

Not to be outdone, the *Mail on Sunday* promptly dispatched Fiona Wingett and Nigel Bowden straight to the Costa Blanca, where Amanda's "beloved woman confidante waits for her". Much to the delight of the *MoS*, it appeared that Amanda came with just the faintest whiff of the L-word, and while mentioning in passing "one of the most moving death scenes ever shown on British television", the hacks soon got down to the nitty-gritty of trawling through "the only relationship that has truly given her any happiness". It was a remarkably detailed account, given that the piece opened with the admission that Amanda "has steadfastly refused to talk about the relationship."

So we now knew that Amanda likes horse-racing, beaches, has a special friend and once had a cancer-scare herself. The *Sunday People* got the measure of the devastation felt by the nation: "What a wonderful week it's been in Weatherfield," said TV critic John Russell, citing "some sensitive script writing" that has "alerted thousands of women around the country to take more care of their health".

Not according to *Sun* hackette Hilary Bonner, who by this time had collared a miffed Amanda Barrie (whose contract was not due to end until October) for that all-important Monday morning splash. The 18 June front page led with "Alma: I'm so angry with Corrie" although by this time Alma (fictional character) was dead. Instead it was good old Amanda "pouring her heart out to the *Sun*" on pages 4,5,6 and 7 who had branded the speedy deterioration of the character that paid her wages as a "cheap ratings ploy". Your number one *Sun* raged indignant at the very idea of using cheap stunts to boost audience share. In the same interview Barrie outlined her concerns: "If you are going to take an issue like this and use it for entertainment you have to be just so very, very careful." Nonetheless, over the next three days the *Sun* filled a further 8 pages with "heart-breaking", "heart-rending", "tear-jerking" Almaballs, none of this for "entertainment", of course.

Meanwhile the more up-market rags were playing the same game but with longer words, choosing to fill the election-void with news of the cultural hammer-blow that was the end of *Friends*.

The doyens of freelance punditry sniffed a 1,000-worder coming from a mile off, leading to some exquisite tosh. *Friends*, a popular sitcom about six New Yorkers being friends, was variously described as "the show that transformed television in the Nineties" (Marcus Dunk, *Express*, 18 June); "a show that helped define a generation" (the aptly named Andrew Buncombe, *Independent*, 19 June); before we were treated to pages of "Your favourite moments", "Those guest appearances in full" and other classic lists-cum-fills.

The *Independent* drafted in a psychologist, Will Self and even journalist and sometime bedwetter Tracey Emin to offer their two ha'penny worth. "I absolutely love it," Emin opined. "My favourite moment was when Rachel cooked a really bad cake." Sadly though, facts were facts: "The eighth series will be their last" confirmed the *Express* of 18 June.

"The ninth series will be their last", asserted every other paper, including the *Sunday Express* of the day before. But as so often these days, the last word (for now) went to the *Mail*'s David Thomas, who in a piece of delectable buffoonery, gave *Friends* the pop-psychology once over and enlightened us as to the programme's real meaning.

"The two apartments on opposite sides of the corridor... are not only materially desirable, they also offer the hope of a spiritual home from home," Thomas gushed, before concluding: "The genius of *Friends* is that it managed to turn its characters' pain into our pleasure." One could have countered that this is roundly the case with almost all successful comedy ever, but Thomas's bombast brooked no dissent: "More than a programme, it is a way of life... to me, *Friends* is American TV at its finest."

A more useful summation as to why the formula was no longer working came from a US viewer quoted in the *Grauniad*: "Ditch Ross and rehire the monkey."

"Pass the salt, Lot"

O·B·N

What song should be the new national anthem?

"God Save Our Tony and Cherie."

PIERS MORGAN
Arena

Nominated by Damian Beeley

£10 paid for entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

IN THE TEAROOM

WHOOPS of delight from Millbank and Downing Street at the emergence of Roy Hattersley as self-appointed leader of the disloyal opposition. No one could be more pleased than the Blair junta that Milord Two-Dinners is to front-up the long awaited counter-coup. What a gift that is!

There can be few sights in politics more ridiculous than Fattersley proclaiming himself the champion of the poor and dispossessed. Indeed, this unappealingly Rabelaisean suet pudding of a peer seems to vindicate "new" Labour's perennial emphasis on image and spin.

The PM's team see Hattersley as the living embodiment of old Labour failure. They like to point out that as one of the great panjandrums of the Callaghan, Foot and Kinnock years, Roy was given the bum's rush by the electorate in four successive general elections. The voters' message was clear: they would not elect a government with him in it. But such is the unpuncturable vanity of the man, he still hasn't got the hint. Sure, you have to admit this is all Downing Street spin. But, for a change, that doesn't make it untrue.

He's tried it on before, of course. The otherwise perfectly stage-managed 1995 Labour conference in Brighton was enlivened by the first Hattersley rebellion over education policy. "If he wasn't leading the revolt of his own accord, we'd pay him serious money to do it," was David Blunkett's message in private on that occasion; while publicly he dismissed the former deputy leader as a "simpleton".

Later that evening Roy heaved himself out of his banquette at English's oyster restaurant and gave a long, sweeping bow in the direction of Her Majesty's press corps. Anyone would have thought he'd single-handedly stormed the Bastille rather than lost a card vote by a margin of three to one. There are those who claim this week (as they have claimed before) that Hattersley's periodic excursions into controversy tend to coincide with a downward drift in the fees he gets for his punditry and journalism. But that unworthy thought is taking negative briefing too far. Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?

'Urquhart'

MIKE O'BRIEN is a loyal sort of chap who, as a minister of the crown at the home office, did much of the government's dirty work on asylum and immigration.

He could hardly have expected to be sacked for his pains – but he was among the first to be rung up by the prime minister and told his ministerial job was needed for someone else. In a brave interview in the *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, Mr O'Brien said he was not too unhappy about the sacking which will give him more time with his family and constituents, etc. He also said he would have more freedom to speak out on his own – which he did almost at once with a sharp attack on the prime minister for dropping a bill to allow pubs to stay open at all times.

Perhaps Mr O'Brien regards his former support for this bill as the reason for his sacking – but the real reason is… Mandy's revenge. It was Mr O'Brien's recollection of that telling phone call from Peter Mandelson about the Hinduja brothers' passport application that cooked Mandy's goose for a second time. As Mandy's hysterical and graceless speech made clear after his election victory, he does not forget those who did him down. The wretched Mr O'Brien's head was the least that would satisfy him.

SO FAREWELL, then, Keith Hellawell, who quietly abdicated as the government's "drugs czar" the day after the election, while everyone was looking the other way.

Hellawell's fate was sealed as soon as President Tony decided to make David Blunkett home secretary. Not because he was failing to win "the war on drugs". Alexander the Great, Napoleon or Rommel wouldn't have done any better in that unwinnable campaign.

Hellawell was the victim of home office territorialism, and Blunkett's earlier chastening experience at the hands of another overmighty subject – Chris Woodhead, the former chief inspector of schools. Blunkett was not about to make the same mistake with Hellawell. The beleaguered drugs supremo had been fighting an undeclared war with officials at the home office, partly over the detail of what kind of targets, if any, should be set for reductions in drug use. But at the heart of the dispute was a fight about who decides policy. The home office just didn't want an outsider blundering across its patch.

Hellawell could have stayed in charge within the home office if the new home secretary had chosen to defend him. But Blunkett wasn't going to fall for that one, not a second time.

"Why don't you quit teaching?"

THE appointment of Lord Goldsmith QC as attorney general has caused much mumbling in the Inns of Court, not least because as one of the country's highest paid commercial lawyers he does not have huge experience of the prosecution system he is now expected to supervise.

But as Joshua Rozenberg, legal editor of the *Telegraph* pointed out, as Milord Goldsmith has no links with Lord Irvine's chambers, "he cannot be termed one of Tony's cronies". Ah but what about the his 1997 donation of "more than £5,000" to the Labour party?

MARGARET McDonagh may have bowed out as Labour's general secretary just in the nick of time: MPs are hopping mad with her and Millbank for cocking up the annual election of three of their own to the party's national executive committee (NEC).

Suspicions were first raised when news arrived that the *EastEnders* actor turned Euro MEP Michael Cashman had beaten the chairman of the parliamentary Labour party Clive Soley for a place. While Soley is seen as something of a clodhopper by many colleagues, membership of the PLP vastly outnumbers the minuscule European Labour party of which Cashman is a member. It transpired that very few MPs even knew that a contest was underway – voting papers had been mailed out after parliament went into recess, and in the middle of the general election campaign, and the results were announced before MPs had time to gather their wits about them and return to the Commons. But someone somewhere had helpfully reminded Cashman to canvass for support, even as his Westminster colleagues were busy in the field. So will Millbank reveal how many votes were cast in this non-election? You bet not!

BEFORE the new trade and industry supremo Patricia Hewitt goes over the top for new nuclear power stations, as many pundits have predicted, she should study the forthright opposition to Sizewell B, the last nuclear power station to be built in Britain.

Among the objectors was the then Greater London Council (leader Ken Livingstone), which hired the excellent services of a seasoned London barrister, Bill Birtles. Birtles developed a sustained attack on the health dangers to the public, especially the London public, from radiation from nuclear power stations even as far away as Sizewell in Suffolk. If Ms Hewitt wants more detail, she may be able to contact Mr Birtles direct. She is after all married to him.

AN unhappy omen for Estelle Morris, the new education secretary, was the news, revealed only in the *Times Educational Supplement*, that a leading school in her Birmingham constituency – Cockshut Hill technology college, which has 1550 students - could not open after the half term break this summer.

The problem was "new building work" under the private finance initiative (PFI), of which Morris is a devoted enthusiast. With his school uninhabitable, headmaster David Gentle was forced to tell parents to keep their children out of school for an extra week – at a cost to the public of more than £110,000.

The PFI project, he disclosed, had been beset by arguments between contractors, local authority and school administrators as to what would or would not be covered by the contract. The result was that parents' voluntary contributions and the local authority had to fill the gaps.

IN CASE anyone thinks home secretary David Blunkett has come up with a great new idea for publishing league tables for police performance, including officers' extraordinary vulnerability to sickness, they should remember former London police inspector, John Kenny.

For at least 15 years, including many of those in which he was a serving officer, Mr Kenny protested in public about his colleagues' sickness rates and demanded the publication of relevant league tables. Scotland Yard, he reflects, "variously obstructed, ridiculed and rejected constructive arguments on the subject".

Will these objections continue and will Mr Blunkett defy them?

FRIENDS of Labour's new burly party chairman Charles Clarke are anxious to stress their man's studious moderation, even when leading the notoriously unruly National Union of Students in the 1970s.

But not everyone remembers him in such a glowing light. So anxious was Clarke not to offend Erich Honnecker and the East German politburo during one of the NUS leader's frequent forays to the "Socialist Bloc", that "Tankie" Clarke once ferociously wrenched a gay rights banner from protesting British students in the centre of east Berlin. Just the right chap, then, to deal with the few remaining dissenters within "New" Labour's ranks.

CAN the appointment of m'lord Jeff Rooker as the new home office minister for immigration and citizenship have anything to do with the fact that the previous incumbent, Barbara Roche, was given a thorough whipping by her liberal-leaning north London chattering class constituents who were unhappy with her "tough on asylum" rhetoric?

Her majority in the very safe Hornsey & Wood Green seat was slashed from 20,499 to a mere 10,614 – one of the biggest swings away from Labour. She has been moved to the safety of Robin Cook's cabinet office while the newly-ennobled Rooker can carry on the unsavoury work from the safety of the Lords – above any criticism from the electorate.

AMONG the many MPs rejoicing at the removal of Paul Boateng as prisons minister is Norman Baker, whose constant harassment of the government earned him an enormous increase in his majority in what is now the safe Liberal Democrat seat of Lewes.

On 28 March Baker wrote to Boateng asking about the recent report of the board of visitors at Lewes prison. Back came a reply from Boateng saying that he had replied to the board and had placed his reply in the Commons library – a familiar way of fobbing off awkward inquiries from MPs. And no wonder. The Lewes visitors' report, in the strongest possible language, condemned conditions in the young offenders' wing and the segregation unit and suggested that both areas were so disgusting they contravened the government's own human rights act.

The report demanded the immediate closure of the young offenders' wing. Boateng replied that there were "no plans" to close the wing, and that a bid to refurbish it had been "unsuccessful in the face of other competing demands for funding". As for the segregation unit, a bid was being prepared to bring the facility up to standard, and this would be submitted when completed.

Once again, here was proof that when Boateng announced on his election for Brent South in 1987 "today Brent South, tomorrow Soweto" he was conveying his intention to ensure that prison conditions in Britain were brought up to the standard of those in, er, Soweto.

> Labour MPs and councillors representing Wansbeck for decades have only achieved one of the highest teenage pregnancies records,
>
> *Rachael Lake election manifesto*

LABOUR's manifesto pledge to "extend and increase paid maternity leave and introduce paid paternity leave" will be music to the ears of Labour MP for Bolton, Ruth Kelly.

Kelly has given birth to no fewer than three children since she joined parliament for the first time in 1997. How she found the time to represent the people who elected her is anybody's guess, but she certainly managed to impress the Dear Leader in her few spare hours, and has been rewarded for her loyalty with the job of economic secretary to the treasury.

TONY BLAIR is shaping up for a battle with public sector unions this autumn as he and chancellor Gordon Brown prepare to turn to the private sector to fund public service expansion, without having to raise taxes for "new" Labour voters in Middle England.

Hawkish advisers in the Number 10 policy unit and at the influential Institute for Public Policy Research have been busily egging the Dear Leader on, convinced that the union chiefs will retreat at the first whiff of grape-shot. The unions – they argue – no longer wield the influence and muscle they once did, and if the prime minister is as pro-business as he keeps claiming, what better opportunity to face down relative unknowns such as Dave Prentis, the new general secretary of public service union, Unison?

But Tony Blair might be in for a surprise. This time the union bosses are genuinely alarmed; and the public sector remains one of their last power-bases. While they may lack industrial muscle these days, they still have the potential to cause mayhem at Labour's conference in September. And this is what they are planning.

So far Blair's privatisation mania has thrown three of the biggest unions together in an unusual display of unity. Unison, the GMB and the Transport and General Workers' Union are drawing up an emergency conference resolution. If and when they are joined by the smaller unions, they will easily command a big enough majority to embarrass the Dear Leader hugely.

Having dispensed with the invaluable fixing prowess of the party's general secretary Margaret McDonagh, who will do the dirty work with the union chiefs to buy them off? Since many at Westminster expect that the business-infatuated Blair will choose an ex-company chief executive to take over from McDonagh this autumn, it appears to be a racing certainty that the gloves will be coming off.

Yet just as the prospect of a union mutiny began to alarm Downing Street, news arrived of a huge cock-up at the Unison conference meeting last week in Brighton. A fringe rally billed as "New Labour's Second Term – Building the Resistance!" flopped, as it became apparent that the three key-note speakers had all failed to show. With Jeremy Corbyn MP and trade union activist Mark Serwotka sending their heartfelt apologies, it looked as though the remaining speaker, environmentalist George Monbiot, would take the starring role. That was until the tragic news filtered through that he would be unable to advise on "building the resistance" since he had fallen from his bicycle.

BRAND NEWS

THE election result was good news for the global "brands" who invested in Tony Blair – not least for burger giant McDonald's, for whom good relations with government are very important.

So long as "new" Labour keeps the minimum wage low, allows the company to "sponsor" schools and thereby get its claws into new markets for its McNuggets, and maintains strict laws against those pesky anti-capitalist protestors, Ronald McDonald will avoid indigestion in Britain.

As the election result was announced, McDonald's revealed a new £100,000 contract with lobbying firm Shandwick. Shandwick's lobbying chief executive Colin Byrne spent the campaign running Labour's "business relations unit" at Millbank. He now works on the burger giant's good relations with government.

Byrne is in fact leading the McDonald's account aided by John McLeod, who coincidentally helped the PR launch of Matrix Chambers, Cherie Booth's law firm. The deal is a fine example of "convergence" between Labour and Conservative: Labour party activist Byrne was hired by Mike Love, McDonald's UK public affairs head – and Margaret Thatcher's former constituency agent! He will also be working for Thatcher's old press secretary Bernard Ingham, who sits on the board of McDonald's UK.

NIKE, another global brand, can also rest easy. It retains new lobbying firm Cicero, which is "named after the inspiring Roman figure Marcus Tullius Cicero" and run by one Stephen Lock, a Labour party member who also sits on the council of pro-euro lobbying group "Britain in Europe".

Cicero did not second staff to the Labour party campaign as the firm felt this might have been in breach of new electoral laws. Secondments may be considered "payments in kind" to the party, requiring a shareholders' resolution; and Lock told the *Eye* he wanted his firm to be "squeaky clean" on this. However, some of his staff are enthusiastic about being loaned to Labour in future.

Cicero can certainly offer Nike good links with Labour. Executive director Richard Elsen was a deputy head of the party's "rebuttal" unit at Millbank in 1997, "working closely with Tony Blair's press team, Gordon Brown and Peter Mandelson". He had previously worked on the key seats unit and been a senior party press officer in London and the West Midlands. Nike, like McDonald's, wants Blair to defend it from unwashed hordes of anti-capitalist rioters. It also needs Labour to keep angry shoppers at bay. Stephen Lock successfully defended Nike and clothes merchant Tommy Hilfiger from Labour's last abortive "rip-off Britain" campaign when Nike and Hilfiger refused to let their clothes be sold cheaply at Tesco.

In theory chancellor Gordon Brown has just declared another war on these kinds of "restrictive practices", but whether Nike and Cicero will be vanquished remains to be seen.

NEW global brand Accenture, the outfit formerly known as Andersen Consulting, can also feel comfortable with Labour's win.

The company had Patricia Hewitt on its payroll as "head of research"; and her promotion to secretary of state for trade and industry means Andersen will surely be well placed to win more massive government contracts – like that for the faulty national insurance NIRS2 system.

Traffic between the government and Andersen/Accenture is two way: while Hewitt moved from Andersen/Accenture into government, last December her public relations officer Vicki Trinder took a job with the public relations team of... Accenture. Joined up government, anyone?

NO ONE is more welcome in "new" Labour circles than an old Tory. So when former Conservative trade minister Anthony Nelson declared that he would vote Labour days before the result, he probably did a big favour for one of the global financial institutions.

Nelson ostensibly defected over Europe – in fact he had already spoken up for the euro at the Labour-friendly pro-euro lobby group Britain in Europe. But he could also be showing how grateful businessmen are turning to the party: he is now vice-chair of US investment bank Salomon Smith Barney.

This firm once hired Derek Draper's lobby firm GPC. It was Draper of course who boasted to the *Observer*'s Greg Palast that he had told Salomon Smith Barney about the detail of Gordon Brown's public spending plans – in particular a limit on spending of 2.75 percent, slightly higher than the predicted amount (2.5 percent). Palast reported that Draper claimed he had been acting on "inside information... If they [Salomon] had acted on it, they'd have made a fortune." Salomon Smith Barney has a new lobbying firm now, Citigate, which appears still to have the same interest in the Labour party: it give "£5,000 or more" to the party's funds.

"Hi! Hi! Lovely to see you! Hi!

FIVE ITV

The Cazalets (BBC1)

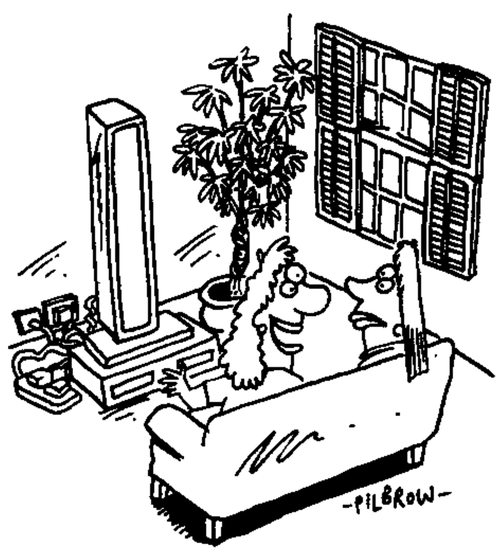
IN the last few years, there's been a problem with BBC drama. With the Austen and Dickens output pretty much filleted in recent years, there's been a deliberate shift away from period dramas to modern novels and original stories. But, stylish though some of them have been, the audiences averted their eyes from both the Kingsley Amis series *Take A Girl Like You* on BBC1 and the Tim Pears adaptation *In A Land Of Plenty* on BBC2. The problem – especially on BBC1 – was that only the soaps brought in the audiences.

The solution to this problem has now been found: a literary adaptation which is a period piece but which can also be presented as a soap without the author's Appreciation Society taking to the correspondence pages of the *Daily Telegraph*. Elizabeth Jane Howard has a certain literary cachet – toney middle-class novels, ex-wife of Kingsley, step-mum to Martin – but no Janeites will mobilise on her behalf if her quartet of novels about the Cazalet family are turned into a jolly, campy romp.

On the page, the Cazalet books were an elderly writer's exercise in historical nostalgia, recreating the atmosphere of her earlier life. On the screen, they also represent nostalgia for a lost form of television. *The Forsyte Saga*, screened in 1967, was the last big TV series to be made in black-and-white and its vast audiences were the factual source of the now metaphorical measure of a show's impact: emptying the pubs on a Sunday night.

The Forsyte Saga is currently being remade by ITV but BBC1 has got in first with its own epic story of toffs having it off across several generations. Starting in the 1930s, **The Cazalets** is all wing collars, maids, vintage motors driven by chauffeurs and children taught by private governesses built like dreadnoughts who declare at start of lessons: "We start each day by reading Shakespeare aloud for an hour and a half."

All drama of this kind might be sub-titled The Hindsight Saga. Numerous scenes invite a wry smile from a viewer who knows more about the events than the characters. This technique is known as The Shadow Of History. The trick is there in episode one of *The Cazalets* when, as the moneyed classes discuss irrelevancies, we fleetingly see on a newspaper the headline: Hitler And Mussolini Make Deal. In another scene, one of the toffs has been to the theatre the night before. He's seen some play by Shaw called *The Apple Cart*. Had he liked it? "Hardly. Shaw's a teetotal, vegetarian, Irish commie."



"We've got narrow screen tv for watching Ally McBeal"

It's all very efficiently done as superior soap opera. The first episode is built around three reliable dramatic standbys: the birth of a baby, the death of a cat and the revelation of a mistress. The direction frequently relies on that device of ironic undercutting so that no sooner has a wife on holiday expressed regret that her husband has been detained by "an important business meeting in London" than we see a shot of him drilling his mistress.

The theory is that these narrative simplicities will keep the broader audience watching, while there's the occasional quirkiness to assure the broadsheet people that they're not entirely wasting their time. In a conventional soap opera, the kiddies' cat would be run over by a car. Here, the mog is strangled by a vengeful nanny and buried in an eccentric family funeral with granny playing the funeral march on the piano beside the french windows.

In the end, series like this depend on the characters. When Nyree Dawn Porter died recently, viewers of pension age still remembered her Irene in *The Forsyte Saga*, and the moment when she was raped by Soames. Premiering in a week when Michael Ancram was drastically playing down his aristocratic background in the Tory leadership race, *The Cazalets* has the problem that the audience is likely to be more resistant to the types portrayed than would have been the case in 1967.

The solution the producers find is to test the protagonists against contemporary prejudices. The men are all bastards – especially Stephen Dillane's philandering Edward Cazalet – apart from the soppy, gentle one who's an artist and declines to join the family business.

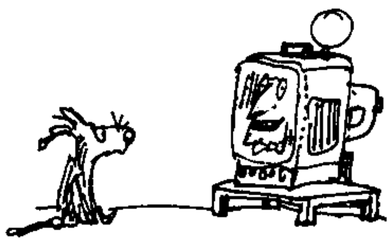
The most sympathetic figures are the two incipient lesbians who daren't express themselves but fret about their lack of interest in "love with a man".

After the ratings failure of *In A Land Of Plenty* on BBC2 – and a run of flops including *Take A Girl Like You* on BBC1 – there were for the first time quite senior voices in the corporation who wondered if it was worth the expense of doing big dramas at all. *The Cazalets*, therefore, is a vital test case.

Jane Howard deliberately wrote the kind of book which isn't written now. The BBC has deliberately adapted it to feel like the TV of the past. But can the fruity toff romp still work when the pubs are not emptied by television but filled with people watching satellite sports? The ratings of *The Cazalets* will be watched with extreme interest.

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS



MONTHS before it was broadcast, Buckingham Palace sought to suppress key elements of the ITV series to mark what would have been Princess Di's 40th birthday, *Diana: Story of a Princess*.

The Prince of Wales's press secretary Mark Bolland was particularly concerned about two avenues of investigation being pursued by production company Brook Lapping. The first of these was the intention to use the clip from Jonathan Dimbleby's 1994 documentary in which the Charles confessed to his affair with Camilla, never shown since it was originally broadcast. The second was the attempt to find out where the rumours that Diana was mentally ill had originated.

Documentary maker Phil Craig traced these back once again to Jonathan Dimbleby, who consulted two psychiatrists following a briefing from a friend of Prince Charles in the middle of the divorce, and came up with the diagnosis of borderline personality disorder which subsequently became common usage among royal hacks.

What had not been revealed previously was that one of these two shrinks was Dr Paul Aylard, brother of the Prince's private secretary, Richard Aylard. Around Christmas Bolland was so determined that these two aspects of the planned documentary should not be shown that he threatened to wheel out Prince William to attack the programme in the same way he attacked the revelations by Diana's former private secretary Patrick Jephson, if ITV bosses refused to bow to his demands.

Fortunately, after much heart-wrenching, the powers that be at ITV decided that the documentary should be broadcast in full, but not before Bolland had phoned his old friend Rebekah Wade, editor of the *News of the Screws*, which duly published a preview of the show, warning that: "The memory of Princess Diana will be dragged through the mud on prime-time TV tonight".

DUMB BRITAIN

The Weakest Link, BBC

Anne Robinson: Which herb is renowned for its stimulating effect on cats?

Contestant: Caffeine.

Robinson: In nature, what is a hornbeam?

Contestant: A shaft of light.

Robinson: What is the only marsupial to live in America?

Contestant: Dolphins.

Speed...
With Jeremy Clarkson
I'M HERE TO SHOW VIEWERS...
WHAT IT'S LIKE TO EXPERIENCE THE SENSATION OF ULTIMATE SPEED...
AS THEY DIVE FOR THE OFF BUTTON
Ken Pyne

LAUNCHING Channel 4's summer schedules back in March, director of programmes Tim Gardam was keen to stress that, despite evidence to the contrary (cf *The Big Breakfast, Big Brother, Something for the Weekend, Richard and Judy,* etc) the once intelligent and innovative channel had not completely dumbed down.

He cited journalist Nick Davies's *Dispatches* documentary, *The Phoney War*, arguing for the legalisation of heroin, as an example of the bold approach he likes. "I want to make programming tougher and edgier," said Gardam.

Davies's programme, a powerful argument that the "war on drugs" was a complete failure costing billions of pounds and thousands of lives, was duly shown last week to overwhelmingly positive reviews. But, say insiders, before the programme was broadcast C4 bosses exhibited plenty of edginess but not much toughness. Davies had to fight to have the programme broadcast at the 9pm peak, rather than being buried in a late-night slot. And C4 did its best to tone down some of its more eye-opening conclusions.

In one scene Davies embarrassed the government's former "drugs czar" Keith Hellawell by repeatedly asking for evidence for his assertion that pure heroin (in contrast to the adulterated black market stuff) is dangerous. Hellawell couldn't back up his claims and was made to look ignorant and foolish. Or rather he would have done, had C4 not cut the embarrassing scene while Davies was abroad and then insisted there was no time to re-edit the programme.

Weeks were taken up arguing over the wording of the script. The nit-picking only stopped when Davies threatened to walk away from the project if his opinions on heroin were watered down any further.

Or rather, it didn't. On Saturday 23 June Channel 4 screened a studio debate chaired by Jon Snow in which "advocates" for and against the status quo put the existing drug laws "on trial" with the studio audience voting at the end. Davies was originally asked to take part. But Lloyd ruled that the terms of the debate must not consider legalisation, only "reform" of the drug laws — and Davies's invitation was withdrawn.

HOW much longer can ITV bosses disguise the pain the current collapse in advertising revenue is bringing them?

Granada (£69m loss before tax) talks about cutting costs, sacking suits and ending "Spanish practices" at *Coronation Street*. But it's going to take a lot more than this to avoid catastrophe.

Both Granada and Carlton have invested heavily in ONdigital – which has turned out to be a bit of a financial black hole (£800m so far with probably £250m more to go). They're changing its name to ITV Digital and there's a "new management structure" in the pipeline, but will this be enough to get anybody to watch it?

Popular shows like *Survivor* were supposed to be part of the solution. According to Carlton.com: "Following its domination of ratings in countries across the globe, *Survivor* looks set to smash records in Britain." *Whoops!* Here response to the show has been so pisspoor that its demotion (from four times a week to just one weekly showing on ITV) leaves its creator Charlie Parsons with a lot of explaining to do.

GOING LIVE

WHEN the BBC's *Ten O'Clock News* went live to Gothenburg to report on rioting surrounding the the European summit, Justin Webb, in a strangely peaceful street, revealed: "We don't know whether it's still going on... they may have gone home."

"Are there questions being asked about the police?" inquired Michael Buerk back in studio. "There certainly will be questions asked," predicted Webb – but not after ten at night.

WHILE BBC2's new Sunday night documentary on the Ulster peace process is called *Endgame in Ireland*, the republic's RTE is refusing to follow the Blairite line.

The Dublin-based broadcaster insisted on sticking a question mark in the title. Which is why Brits saw *Endgame in Ireland* while RTE1 viewers watched something called *Endgame in Ireland?*

SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore

Diana Ross McWhirter

TEXTUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE

LIKE watching your granny trying to breakdance, there's something strangely enjoyable about the BBC desperately trying to plug in to the zeitgeist.

Faced with an ITV Saturday night that looks likely to include two instalments of premiership football next season, BBC1 controller Lorraine Heggessey was understandably concerned. Her riposte was immediate, if a trifle perplexing: on Saturday 9 June we were treated to *The Joy of Text*, a whole evening's entertainment on the subject of mobile phone text messaging.

Not surprisingly the theme night was an embarrassing flop, panned by slavering critics gifted an easy butt to kick, and registering a pisspoor 2.9 million in the ratings. Heggessey's baby went head to head with ITV's repeat of *An Audience with Cliff Richard*... and took a horrible pasting, as that byword for contemporary cool Sir Cliff notched up an audience more than twice the size.

And although the BBC boasted it had received 500,000 text messages from viewers, in the context of the one billion sent every month (and after days of Beeb plugging plus an entire evening of prime-time telly), the evening's entertainment had managed to garner just 1.5 percent of the day's text messages: hardly a switchboard swamping.

But if a turkey is one thing, a turkey that won't lie down and die is another. As a memento to a heinous misjudgement, it's hard to beat the book compiling the "best" of the messages sent in that evening: *The Joy of Text* (revealingly subtitled *The Fastest Book Ever Written*). Bludgeoned into rough chapter headings of Funny, Romantic, Thoughtful and Weird, it is of course none of these, but a collection of sorry jokes and corny platitudes spelt without verbs and spattered with exclamation marks. Sample: "Every1's difrnt, so its abnorml to be norml!"

Unfortunately, because Heggessey had agreed to a cross-media tie-in with ravenous independents Lion Television weeks ago, the publication of the book was a done deal. Thus, an evening of quite magnificent fatuousness mutated into what may be the worst book ever, and what was supposed to be a Heggessey PR stunt has emerged as a grim *memento mori.*

'The Zapper'

AD NAUSEAM

A WELL known rule-of-thumb in film is never work with animals. Unfortunately for film-makers, a well-known rule of thumb for second-rate advertising creatives is always work with animals. Thus, we have Bacardi Breezer parading their dancing, night-clubbing (and presumably pissed) tomcat: "Cats get birds" is the brilliant piece of lateral-thinking there, if you missed it.

Ford is using another cat, this one seeking refuge underneath its exceedingly safe Mondeo. (One would imagine that beneath a car is one of the more hazardous places for a cat to have a nap, but anyway). And now Royal & Sun Alliance has unveiled a cutesy little dog called Lucky to sell insurance, in a slot that shows some worn cinefilm of Lucky playing in the park before, we surmise, he disappeared – the idea being that should your four-legged friend gets mashed by a juggernaut you'll get £500 from RSA. Which is nice.

Ignoring the fact that playing on the "aah, puddy-cat" factor is one of advertising's oldest ploys; ignoring too the fact that Volvo, Magic FM, Mr Kipling, Renault, Virgin Radio, Volkswagen, Pledge Dust & Go and Ford's own Focus have all used cats and dogs within the last year, both the Lucky stunt and the Tomcat wheeze do seem strangely similar, especially as they're being used to push totally different products. Both have opted to use near-identical flyposters – which are illegal, it should be stressed – as campaign spin-offs urging passers-by to phone in should they have "seen" either Lucky or Tom. Can it be pure coincidence that the Tom campaign, which aired first, was conceived by McCann-Erickson, which at the time also held the RSA account? Surely Ogilvy & Mather, which took the account off McCann's, wouldn't stoop so low as to take the idea as well?

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

Calvin Klein
PUBLICITY DEPT.
IT'S ALL ABOUT PUBLICITY.....
WE WANT OUR NAME SPREAD AROUND EVERYWHERE.....
EVEN 'BAD' PUBLICITY IS GOOD!!!
OH LOOK..... TONY BLAIR WEARS CALVIN KLEIN PANTS
OHMYGODD... WE'RE RUINED!!!
SCREAM!!

DOWN ON THE FARM

NOT SINCE Windscale sanitised its name to Sellafield has there been such a cynical makeover as the reincarnation of the Maffia as Defra, the department of the environment, food and rural affairs.

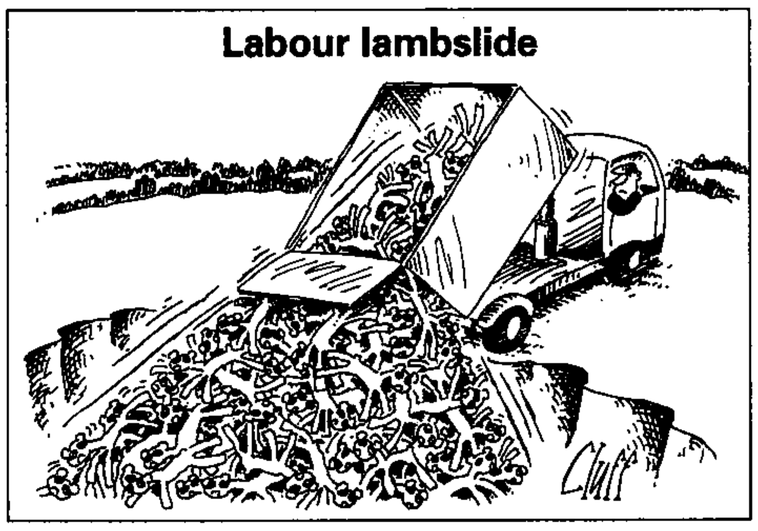
As this was rapidly translated into anything from "Death Ray" and "Death Row" to the "Destruction of English Farming Regulatory Agency", the message had come over loud and clear. For all intents and purposes, apart from switching the puppet at the top from Nick Brown to the Great Caravanner, Mrs Margaret Beckett, the new gang is just the Maffia under another name.

Someone who deserves a genuine Not-the-Honours-List award for his courage in speaking out against the Maffia is Roger Windsor, a council member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons who has been involved in the foot-and-mouth disaster in south-west Scotland. Like many other vets he has been outraged by the Maffia's incompetence, dishonesty and wholesale breaches of the law, and at the council's latest meeting he could contain his indignation no longer.

He began by saying that, as the vets' leading professional body, the college should have withdrawn any further cooperation with Maff when the running of the FMD crisis was taken over by the politicians and the government's two chief scientific advisers, neither with any veterinary qualifications: Prof David King, the chemist, and the Imperial College figure-fiddler Prof Roy Anderson.

These two men had been responsible for the unnecessary destruction of up two million animals "in the name of elections and mathematics", with their "contiguous cull" (or "postcode slaughter") policy, whereby animals are killed simply because they are on farms within "three kilometres" of an infected premises. Windsor's comments on the record of Prof Anderson, whom he said "should be called not the Professor of Epidemiology but the Professor of Extermination" cannot be repeated for legal reasons.

Windsor rattled off examples of ministry incompetence he knew about at first hand, such as the farm in Galloway where the owner was milking when a convoy of army vehicles drove up to slaughter his sheep. They had been given the correct



map reference but the wrong map. Animal welfare had been "completely ignored". Farmers were forbidden to move healthy animals even when they were starving and filthy, and they were forced to keep animals "in conditions for which under normal conditions they would have been prosecuted".

But the greatest professional scandal, said Windsor, which "will forever be a blot on the reputation of Maff", was the way vets had been routinely forced to breach their professional code by signing "form A" declarations that farms were "infected" even though the animals had been inspected and found healthy. They had been told by senior ministry officials (themselves vets) that, if they did not sign the forms, the livestock would all be killed anyway and the farmer would receive no compensation.

Farmers were similarly blackmailed into accepting the illegal slaughter of their sheep by being told that, if they did not cooperate, their cattle would also be killed. The police had been used to break down doors, to tear away pet goats from young girls, or to kill the five pet sheep belonging to a vet's widow. "These horror stories," Windsor concluded, "refer only to Dumfries" but had been repeated in many other places.

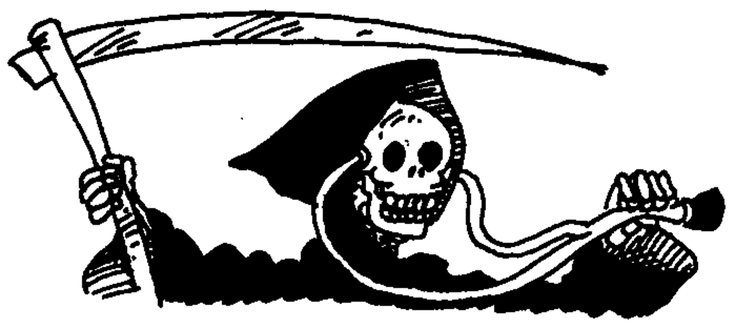
Did Maff still have any idea "of the meaning of decency, compassion or even justice"? If the ministry was now planning to carry on this obscene and pointless mass-slaughter more or less indefinitely, it really was time for his profession to stand up and call for the only alternative to such insanity – ie mass-vaccination.

'Even Newer Muckspreader'

● TWO-THIRDS of farmers are against joining the euro, according to a large survey by Lloyds TSB. Its head of agriculture Tim Porter says this is surprising and "could be due to a dearth of information, particularly regarding the economic rationale for it".

This arrant arrogance – that farmers are so stupid they need a banker to tell them what to think – is misplaced. Farmers understand the effects of a strong currency all too well. But they have also had a foretaste of the European superstate: they have lived in its grip since the notorious IACS (integrated administrative control system) was imposed in 1992 and don't want it.

'Gumboot'



DOING THE ROUNDS

HEALTH secretary Alan Milburn's much-publicised volt farce from central control freak to relaxed devolver of power may not be all that it seems.

The Queen's speech announced the NHS reform and decentralisation bill, which sets a legal basis for the abolition of health authorities to be replaced by fewer strategic health authorities. This will, Milburn claims, free hospital and primary care trusts from local bureaucracy. In reality it will give Milburn far more power to interfere.

The government has set up a number of supposedly free-thinking committees of the great and good in the NHS to give the impression of shared decision-making; but as one member of the NHS modernisation agency put it: "Despite the rhetoric, we're not actually consulted much about the modernisations. Milburn just goes ahead and announces it all. The new strategic health authorities will have yes men and women parachuted in as chief executives and power will shift even closer to the centre."

Milburn's centralising tendencies are further betrayed by the absurd abolition of community health councils (CHCs), just about the only local, independent source of accountability in the NHS. The supposedly independent commission for health improvement (CHI) was suspiciously quiet in the election run-up and a report into "inaccurate" waiting lists at Stoke Mandeville hospital compiled by the national patients access team was held over until after the election, when Milburn was conveniently able to announce that Labour was abandoning waiting list pledges.

The report found that 43 patients were "inappropriately suspended" from the list as the trust "struggled to fire-fight problems caused by rising demand, nurse shortages, a lack of senior managers, reconfiguration and a PFI scheme".

The CHI has now written to the *British Medical Journal* (21 June) about its difficulties "capturing patients' experience… the commission has experimented with organising meetings and using patient diaries, but low response rates cast doubt on the representativeness of the views collected." Instead of farting around with diaries, why isn't CHI helping the health service ombudsman out with his backlog of complaints, surely the most obvious way of "capturing patients' experience"?

Ombudsman Michael Buckley has taken on 12 extra investigators and still has 46 cases that have been waiting for more than a year. The GMC too could do with some help, with continued sniping from the self-protective British Medical Association (BMA), imminent changes to medical regulation announced by controller Milburn and another seven "high profile cases" in its own backlog which will rival the horrors of Bristol and Shipman. One involves a surgeon known locally as "The Teminator". It dragged on for years because no one examined and acted on individual patient complaints.

● **Milburn's most obvious stab at devolution is to give GPs control of £40bn of the NHS budget. These are the same GPs who have just voted overwhelmingly to consider mass resignation because they are overburdened with paperwork and responsibility.**

A measure of the challenge ahead is tucked away on page 1463 of the *BMJ* (16 June), in a massive Britain-wide survey of patients with heart disease – the government's top target for improving the nation's health. The study of 548 GPs mainly from large, well-organised computerised practices, found that they had only managed to identify 2.5 percent of their patients as having heart disease, when the true prevalence ranges from 3 to 7 percent. Of those who were lucky enough to be spotted, only half were on aspirin and very few were on other drugs such as beta blockers, ACE inhibitors and cholesterol-lowering drugs even when there is clear evidence that they would benefit. Giving GPs more management responsibility may just make them even less likely to be able to identify and treat the patients who need it.

● **The research also found that 26 percent of men and 20 percent of women with heart disease still smoke, which makes their drug treatment largely irrelevant. It also highlights the absurdity of the government's decision to shelve its bill banning tobacco advertising. This despite Milburn's promise six months ago that it was "essential to get it on the statute books" to "protect public health, safeguard children and reduce health inequalities."**

Health minister Yvette Cooper was equally forthright: "In this country alone, a reduction in smoking following an advertising ban could save £40 million and 3000 lives a year." Without the ban, "new" Labour has no chance of delivering its promise of a first class NHS. They'll be smoked out of office.

M.D.

Drug Update

CONCERNS that fashionable anti-depressants like Prozac and Seroxat might be linked to suicide prompted the Medicines Control Agency (MCA) to instruct the drug manufacturers to issue a health warning.

Eli Lilly, which makes top-selling Prozac, was told to include the caution: "Occasionally thoughts of suicide or self-harm may occur or may increase in the first few weeks of treatment with Prozac, until the anti-depressant effect becomes apparent. Tell your doctor immediately if you have any distressing thoughts or experiences."

Eli Lilly could not contemplate mentioning "suicide" in the same breath as its soaraway "miracle" drug Prozac and so entered "negotiations" with the MCA over the wording.

With full MCA approval, the health warning now reads: 'The symptoms of depressions may include thoughts of harming yourself or committing suicide. Until the full anti-depressant effect becomes apparent, it is possible that these symptoms of depressions may increase in the first few weeks of treatment. Tell you doctor…"

Conveniently the word Prozac disappears. Not surprisingly other drug manufacturers, like SmithKline Beecham, which makes Seroxat, have also entered "negotiations" with the MCA.

The MCA is of course headed by a former top executive at SmithKline, Dr Ian Hudson.

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

THE DEEP NORTH

MUCH of the media hand-wringing that followed last month's riots in Oldham focused on the segregation of the poorer sections of the community into white and Asian "ghettos", with the Asians getting the worst of the deal.

None of this was news to locals and even less to members of the council. Way back in 1990 the council commissioned an internal report into housing allocation which found that the authority (then Labour-controlled, now Lib Dem) was conniving in practices supposedly more at home in the American Deep South than post-industrial Britain.

Instead of accepting its conclusions, an embarrassed council buried the report, which had been written by one of its own senior housing officers. But it was leaked to the commission for racial equality (CRE), which launched its own investigation.

Three years later the CRE passed a verdict of unlawful racial discrimination, confirming Oldham council's own reluctant findings that it had:

- made Asian applicants spend longer on waiting lists;
- allocated them lower quality properties;
- segregated them on specific estates.

The CRE and the council agreed a five-year plan to reverse the damage. That period ended in 1998. Nobody expected it to completely eliminate racism in housing, but surely some progress would be made. So, what happened over those five years? Er, nothing. Or, at least, nothing the CRE can tell us. It says it cannot find the closing report on the five-year plan. Nor can Oldham's supposedly keen-to-do-better council.

HACKNEY MARSH

ALLEGATIONS of corruption in Hackney's internal audit and housing investigations section are on a grand scale, even for a borough not unused to its staff putting their hands in the till.

The list of Hackney fraudbusters' alleged misdemeanours is impressive: millions of pounds missing; backhanders paid for not investigating frauds; off-shore companies in the Caribbean; money laundering; threats of violence against potential whistleblowers.

An investigation is to be headed by the director of social services, Mary Richardson. Her total lack of experience of fraud investigation is supposed to be a plus, ensuring her independence.

(She was previously Haringey's director of social services, where she ran a department which was found partly responsible for the gruseome death of eight-year-old Victoria Climbié at the hands of Marie Kouao and Carl Manning, both of whom are serving life sentences for murder. Haringey social services department was so inadequate that a hard-pressed social worker delayed a visit to Victoria's home, which could have been crucial to her survival, because it was thought, wrongly, that the girl had scabies.)

Lib Dem councillors at Hackney who are worried Richardson may be too soft on the "fraudbusters" have handed a crucial file of evidence, received anonymously, to Inspector Knacker.

BATH TIME

WEALTHY Bath and North-east Somerset council (Banes), in the enviable position of having no debt thanks to its substantial property portfolio, is quietly developing a plan to share some of its riches. Not with council taxpayers, but with a private sector "partner" who will take over the running of key council services such as education, housing, social services, trading standards, housing benefits, council tax, business rates and, er, finance.

More than 20 private finance initiative (PFI) players have replied to an invitation to tender in the *Official Journal of European Competition* (*OJEC*), including the dreaded Crapita, recently sacked by Lambeth for screwing up its housing benefit and council tax services (*Eyes passim*).

News of Bath's privatisation scheme, which has so far cost nearly £1m, has not been shared with either the public or the council's staff by the management board. Still, staff and taxpayers need not worry, as the whole exercise is in the safe hands of Jean Hinks, director of resources and the woman with overall control of the city's splendidly on-budget and on-time Bath Spa project (*Eyes passim*).

● **SO FAREWELL, then, Helen Wright, lord provost of Dundee's Labour city council, deposed last week after a row over her expenses. Ms Wright, was the city's first female provost (mayor), which allegedly did not please masonic and "macho, hard-drinking" elements among her colleagues. Perhaps it was foolish, then, of the lord provost, whose legitimate allowances and expenses last year totalled a not ungenerous £28,000, to give a hostage to fortune — not to mention crude national stereotypes — by generously putting a tenner into the collection plate at Donald Dewar's funeral... and claiming it back out of petty cash.**

EDUCASHUN NEWS

WHAT can happen to public services when they fall into the hands of private companies is illustrated in Leeds, where since April the running of the local education authority (LEA) has been handled by Education Leeds, a partnership with Crapita.

Education Leeds first decided to hold its board meetings behind closed doors (*Eye* 1026). Then it boosted staff morale by announcing the scrapping of the council's long-standing policy of no compulsory redundancies. Now it has come up with a hit list of 11 high schools and two primary schools to be closed — not because they are bad or unpopular but because demographics will result in some empty places over the next few years. Faced with the choice of reducing class sizes or saving money, Education Leeds went for the money.

One of the schools earmarked for closure, Tinshill Primary, received a glowing Ofsted report earlier this year. Another, Leopold Primary, is one of the fastest-growing schools in the city. But apparently they don't deliver sufficient "value for money", according to Education Leeds supremo Chris Edwards.

● **MEANWHILE in Islington, now a year into a £10m contract with Cambridge Education Associates to run the LEA, the company is pushing through £800,000 of cuts this year and another £600,000 in 2002-03, including job losses. According to an internal memo leaked to the *Eye*, this is to meet "market expectations". In other words, the primary focus has become the bottom line rather than educating children. As Education Leeds's Edwards says: "We're going to have to think differently" in future. Quite.**

High Principals

NOW that the construction of Oxford University's Wafic Said Business School and Rothermere American Institute has been completed, other university departments have started to dream up schemes to move to pastures new, if not always greener.

As reported in *Eye* 1029 Dr John Rowett, the new warden of Rhodes House, HQ of the Rhodes Trust, has controversial plans to move the Commonwealth books collection in Rhodes House Library (now minus the American collection thanks to the Vere Harmsworth Library at the Rothermere) to a small cramped basement area previously occupied by toilets, and to turn the library into a common room.

Such is the opposition to the move favoured by Rowett, otherwise known as the Chief Rhodent, that at a recent meeting of the Rhodes Trust several trustees stormed out when a compromise solution was proposed. Under this the library would remain open until five o' clock each evening, at which point it would transform into a cocktail lounge for Rhodents to nibble among the books, in flagrant defiance of Bodleian Library regulations.

Cynics have commented that quietly mooted plans to establish an African Institute at spy college, St Anthony's, which would mean the removal of the African Collection at Rhodes House as well as the American collection, means that any compromise would be no more than a stay of execution.

Even the main body of the great Bodleian Library is not immune to change, although as with Rhodes House, the planned developments are being closely guarded. Reg Carr, the director of Oxford University Library Services, has banned all discussion in the staff newsletter, *Outline*, of the proposed removal of large chunks of the library's historic collection to a disused bindery on the Osney Mead industrial estate, which, due to its proximity to the River Thames, spent much of last winter under water..

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

KNIFE & PACKER

AFTER THE BABYSITTING DISASTER LAST TIME WE READ BEDTIME STORIES TO LOTTE, WE PROMISE WE WONT MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE AGAIN...
THERE'LL BE NO KAFKA, BORGES OR GRASS THIS TIME!
NO WAY! TAKING YOUR ADVICE WE'VE BROUGHT SOME GREAT PICTURE BOOKS WITH US!
HISTORY OF DADAISM
EXPRESSIONIST ETCHINGS

NOOKS and CORNERS

WYRE FOREST was not the only constituency where the election was fought over a local building. In Kidderminster it was the hospital; in Colchester a significant issue was the town's colossal water tower, known as "Jumbo".

More than 130ft high and once the second largest in the country, this mammoth brick erection was designed by borough engineer Charles Clegg and completed in 1883. Abandoned by Anglia Water in 1984, it has been at risk ever since.

The threat to mutilate this much-loved local landmark by converting it into flats was exposed in *Eye* 889. Fortunately, the council turned down the plans – with, amazingly, the good councillors ignoring the advice of their planning officers.

In 1998 Jumbo was bought by Victory Gate Properties, which now calls itself Jumbo Colchester Ltd. On its behalf the architect Simon Plater then proposed to replace the water tank by a two-story glass walled house – a luxury High Tec aerial pad whose lucky occupants would be able to gaze down on all Colchester while all Colchester looked up at them.

Again in defiance of their officers Colchester council twice turned down planning applications to alter the character of what is, in fact, a listed building in a conservation area.

In the recent election the Conservative candidate made the fate of Jumbo part of his manifesto and the shadow culture secretary even visited Colchester during the campaign to support the glass house in the sky scheme. The sitting Liberal Democrat Bob Russell and the Labour candidate both wanted the tower to remain unaltered but converted to create a public viewing platform. The result: the Lib Dem vote rose and the Tory vote fell. The people of Colchester spoke.

Undaunted the developer is to appeal against the refusal of listed building consent while Mr Plater has submitted a revised application. In this the corners of the water tank are to be retained but the sides replaced by bronzed glass. And, as a further sop to public opinion, there will be limited public access to the top of Jumbo. I am sorry to have to report that the Victorian Society has feebly given up the fight to leave the water tower alone and English Heritage may be wavering.

The reelected Mr Russell is kind enough to suggest that my original article helped stiffen the resolve of councillors to protect Jumbo. Well, I hope this return visit encourages them not to surrender in this war of attrition being waged by Jumbo Colchester Ltd. If only the council had bought Jumbo when it was offered for a song back in 1984…

MEANWHILE at Brynmawr in Wales things may not be quite as bad as I have reported (Eyes passim). Although the administration building and other peripheral structures around the Rubber Factory have been brutally and pointlessly destroyed, the nine elegant, glorious shell concrete domes remain intact and demolition has temporarily come to a halt.

This may be to allow removal of asbestos, but it may also well be a response to the recent press coverage of the affair and, in particular, to the television film about the building and its fate broadcast by BBC Wales. Since that was shown on 27 May the people of Brynmawr and beyond have grasped the significance of their modern architectural heritage. There have been nightly demonstrations outside the site and the elected thugs of Blaenau Gwent council are visibly rattled. They are threatening to sue the BBC for "misrepresentation" even though their leader, John Hopkins, has admitted publicly that there is no concrete proposal to use the cleared site. The developer has announced that he will stop demolition if he is given a mere £6m.

A public meeting is scheduled for 27 June in the Temple of Peace in Cardiff as part of Architecture Week in Wales. Both the Welsh assembly and CADW – the local, spineless equivalent of English Heritage – have been invited to appear to show their concern. We shall see. However, rumour has it that demolition may resume this week – with all the councillors absent on a jaunt to Australia to watch rugby. Such is civic pride and responsibility.

IN SCOTLAND the biggest architectural scandal is the cost and design of that pretentious symbol of authoritarian government, the parliament building, which is inexorably taking shape opposite Holyrood Palace (price tag: £250m and rising). It certainly won't be a masterpiece by its ostensible and now departed architect, the late Enric Miralles [*Eyes passim ad nauseam*].

How "new" Labour managed to foist on Scotland this "democratic" curiosity that practically nobody wanted is a story both farcical and salutary, now told in *All The First Minister's Men* by David Black and Ian Hamilton (Birlinn, £7.99p). Oddly it has not been reviewed in any of the architectural journals.

'Piloti'

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH

Tom Stoppard's got a nerve, slagging off modern art at the Royal Academy dinner! I mean, who does he think he is?
COME OFF IT, TRACEY + CO!
TRAVESTIES
Yeah – who is he?
I haven't got the faintest – but he must be deeply ignorant!
OME OFF IT, ACEY + CO!
TRAVESTIES

I-SPY

Tunbridge Wells, Kent

Submitted by Geoffrey Copus. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

THE BBC's tacky Cardiff Singer of the World competition has been tackier than ever since sponsor BP Oil pulled out.

Anyone who watched the TV finals from St David's Hall will have been less than thrilled by the wraparound package of perkily banal interviews and a stage set that transformed the hall into a shabby approximation of a second-rate Las Vegas gambling joint. It's all to do with faltering viewing figures, which is why the bulk of this year's coverage has been banished to BBC Knowledge: the digital channel no one watches.

But a more serious issue is whether the competition can credibly continue to organise itself like a classical music alternative to the Eurovision Song Contest. Each singer taking part supposedly represents a country, and for the BBC's convenience the number is fixed at 25. But if you imagined there was some standard, rigorous procedure within each country for choosing its national representative, you'd be wrong.

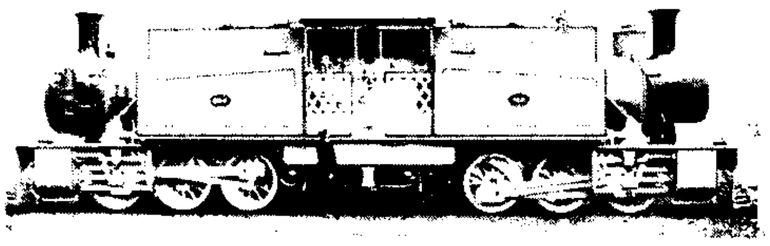
With most countries it's just a matter of who happens to turn up on the day that a travelling BBC official is in town to hear them. And there are entirely different selection rules for England. And different ones again for Wales.

What's more, the whole competition is weighted in favour of the UK in that England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland get separate contestants while vast territories like the United States and China have to make do with just the one. It's hardly justice. Especially in past years when, as insiders at the BBC admit, there haven't always been 25 worthy candidates from 25 different national backgrounds.

On one occasion a "representative" from Mexico arrived in Cardiff, never having been auditioned by anyone and obviously inadequate. An inquiry followed into how she had been chosen and it transpired that her name had been put forward by Sir John Tooley, former head of the Royal Opera. Tooley admitted he had never heard her, but said she had been recommended to him by Placido Domingo – who had also never heard her, but said she had been recommended to him by his mother.

When pressed, the BBC accepts that the idea of national representatives is arbitrary, discredited and irrelevant to the universe of classical singing where national borders count for little. Last time round the winner of the competition, Anja Harteros, "represented" Germany but was in fact of Greek parentage. This year's Greek representative, Panajotis Iconomou, was born and raised in Germany. It's all a nonsense but the BBC sustains it. Why? Because the opportunity for flag-waving, however artificial, helps the Beeb sell its TV coverage to foreign networks.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'



SIGNAL FAILURES

The Cullen fields

LAST WEEK Lord Cullen's first report on the 1999 Paddington train crash documented the shambles in the rail industry which led to the accident but avoided criticising any of the politicians, civil servants, advisers and consultants who created that shambles or subsequently ignored it.

The "incompetent management and inadequate procedures" identified by Cullen were well known long before his report was published: they were predicted even before the Tories privatised British Rail and have been known to the Labour government for four years. The second part of Cullen's inquiry last year examined safety regulation, and when its findings are published the government could, at long last, be officially advised to address the diseased structure of the railway.

That defective structure was so obvious when the Paddington crash followed the 1997 Southall crash – on the same tracks – that the government quickly promised to divest Railtrack of its responsibility for regulating the entire rail system's safety. But instead of creating a version of the civil aviation authority, "new" Labour simply told Railtrack to turn its safety division into a stand-alone organisation called Railway Safety. In practice little has changed – not surprising when key posts in Railway Safety are filled by the people who headed Railtrack's unimpressive safety division.

The glaring and predicted flaw in Railtrack having a policing role was that its safety division went easy on Railtrack while demanding perfection from other companies. Train builders and operators had to keep modifying their trains to satisfy the purists at Railtrack while those same purists – as Cullen's report shows – turned a blind eye to evidence that Railtrack's signalling on the approaches to Paddington was far from ideal.

The decision to create Railway Safety instead of a genuinely independent safety body was a typical half-hearted and half-witted response by "new" Labour to the worrying reality exposed or confirmed by the Paddington crash. The 89 recommendations in Cullen's first report are about patching up the railway's blisters and sores; it remains to be seen whether his second report will identify a cure.

Colemanballs?

IN June 1998 *Eye* 952 warned that delays caused to the Southall crash inquiry by the futile attempt to prosecute the driver meant that "some of the factors which contributed to the accident may continue" until the inquiry was held.

Vic Coleman, then deputy chief inspector of railways at the health and safety executive (HSE), responded (Letters, *Eye* 953): "I have to tell you that Dr B. Ching is on the wrong track. It is not and never has been necessary for accident reports to be published or prosecutions to be heard before something can be made safe."

Last week's report on the 1999 Paddington crash states that after Southall the HSE "took the view that it was inappropriate to approve the [Paddington] resignalling scheme until the inquiry into the crash at Southall had been completed and any concerns which had been raised about signalling had been taken into account. Unfortunately that inquiry was greatly delayed by having to await disposal of a criminal prosecution."

PS: Since June 1998 Vic Coleman has been promoted to chief inspector of railways at the HSE.

'Dr B. Ching'

Letters

Private Eye

Brown sauce

Sir,

No doubt that following Nick Brown's appointment as minister for work, we can look forward to the unemployment figures failing to minus zero. However, as an unemployed person I am not particularly looking forward to the knock on my door from the man with the bolt gun.

ANDREW COOPER,

Cinderhill, Nottingham.

Incendiary comments

Sir,

Timothy McVeigh was executed yesterday for the Oklahoma bomb blast.

If he had done it over here (mainland UK) he would have been out by now, been invited for tea at 10 Downing Street, made an MP and been nominated for a Nobel peace prize. Plus, of course, the yanks would be holding fundraising parties for him and his cause.

Yours,
JOHN G. CRAWLEY,

Oslo, Norway.

Lookalike

Wheen

Duncan Smith

Sir,

The Tory Party crashes from one disaster to another. Do they not realise the dangers of moving to the left in their current search for a leader? Iain Duncan Smith is shurely a very poor attempt to enter Grauniad journo and Karl Marx biographer Francis Wheen into the leadership election race.

Photographic evidence of this withheld, name and address willingly supplied.

Yours faithfully,
E. BENNET,

London E14.

Poor SAP

Sir,

As Vice President of Pedantic Twits Inc., I would like to point out that the software installed by the BBC (Eye 1030) is not called "SAP". This is the name of the German company that produces the notoriously complex Enterprise Resource Management system called "R/3". It usually requires swarms of hyper-expensive consultants to install it. But then, consultants were always Sir John Birt's stock-in-trade, so no surprise there.

Yours sincerely,
ALAN MAGRATH,

Via e-mail.

Strat sphere

Sir,

Um, assuming that the "Rory" referred to in the Bose advert (Eye 1030) is Rory Gallagher (who did indeed play a Stratocaster®), then asking him about there being only one "Strat" is going to be a bit difficult: sadly Rory died in 1995. Of course it might be a subtle reference to Rory Bremner doing an impersonation of The Reverend Blair playing his "Strat"; but somehow I doubt it.

Yours,
ERIC KRYPTONITE,

(another Stratocaster® user)

Mann power

Sir,

I write to clarify the insinuation contained within the article "Race for the Top" dated 1 June 2001.

The article sought to imply that Mr Lee Jasper played some role in securing or influencing the procurement of Mann Weaver Selection Ltd on behalf of the Greater London Authority. As chair of the Greater London Authority panel responsible for the recruitment, employment and terms and conditions for GLA staff, I wish to correct the false impression created by your article.

I appointed Mann Weaver, a specialist equality recruitment company, along with another consultant to help the authority ensure broad representation of black and ethnic minority people within our recruitment process. It is incorrect to say there is no audit trail – there was a clear process where a number of consultants were invited to bid competitively.

Mr Lee Jasper, senior policy adviser to the mayor, had no involvement whatsoever in the GLA procurement processes relating to Mann Weaver.

Yours faithfully,
LEN DUVALL GLA,

Member for Greenwich and Lewisham.

Coping well

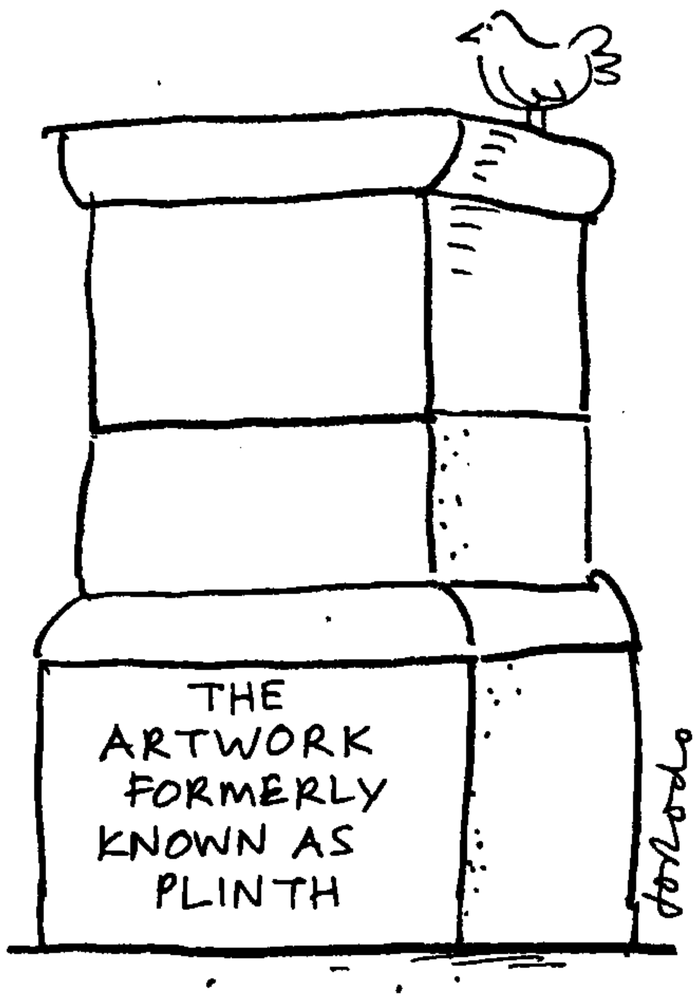
Sir,

I don't know. In attacking Wendy Cope, Bookworm presumably thinks himself on the side of "all the proper literateurs" [sic] published by Faber and Faber. Such an idea might be easier to credit if he had known how to spell the word. And if he had also known that Larkin's "two" lines on bad parenting ("They fuck you up, your mum and dad") are, in fact, one line.

Pedantry aside, his improvised example of a Cope parody ("Whilst pondering my dear departed / I farted") is a toilet humour travesty which entirely overlooks the fact that Cope is funny because she is such an intelligent and restrained mimic (unless, of course, Bookworm intended a parody of Paul McCartney). And as to what T S Eliot, founding editor of the Faber poetry list, and author of "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats", "Aunt Helen", "The Hippopotamus" and the "Bolo" ballads would have made of Cope's "verse-lite"... I don't know either, but I can guess.

Yours quite seriously,
JEREMY NOEL-TOD,

Via e-mail.



Water course

Sir,

Stanley Graham (Eye 1030) claims his intimate knowledge of the West Craven district qualifies him to reject MAFF's theories over F&M. The last time I checked, Austwick was in the Ribble valley, and Gargrave in Airedale – not in Wharfedale as he suggests (unless the Ministry Formerly Known As MAFF has cunningly moved them!) How water originating at the sources of the Aire (around Malham) can end up in the Wharfe, I do not know. While we're at it, please tell your cartoonist McLachlan ("ee-mails") that Ilkley Moor is in West, not North, Yorkshire! I know it is all "Oop North" to you people, but then, some of our own people are not too sure.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL MURPHY,

Keighley, W. Yorks.

Free school music?

Sir,

It doesn't matter which accent you speak with, you aren't going to become the next Yehudi Menuhin unless you can be bothered to get off your arse and practise once in a while. A point lost on your correspondent Justin Horton (Eye 1030), who scoffs so ignorantly at a profession which has been working-class since the dawn of time.

You don't even need a lot of cash these days. "New" Labour's education "reforms" may well have been ruinous for our education system generally, but it's impossible to fault their investment in school music lessons, which now cost almost nothing (including free hire of an instrument) in most local authorities.

Yours,
AARON LEWIS,

Luton, Beds.

Common parlance

Sir,

Why does Justin Horton (Eye 1030) want to hear working-class accents on Radio 3? Does he find the music too taxing?

If he wants to hear common people in full spate, I suggest that he listen in to Radio 4, where they absolutely rule the roost.

Yours sincerely,
STEPHEN MEYER,

Shropshire.

BANK HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS

Would Funeral Directors please note the following deadlines for Death Notices

Staffordshire Sentinel

Only Kidlington

Sir,

Dr B. Ching says (Eye 1030) that Oxford station was a strange choice for Virgin Crosscountry to choose for launching its new trains because Virgin has reduced the number of services calling at Oxford. This is true, but does not take account of the fact that all of the industry insiders and journos who were along for the free ride (what's the betting that that service ran on time?) would have wanted easy access to the beardy's mansion (for the launch party) in Old Kidlington only two or three miles down the road.

DAN HUNN,

Oxford.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Nick Faldo has created a Roman love pavilion for his forthcoming nuptials. He has incorporated a recessed ledge so that they happy couple can mount upon it during the ceremony."
Radio 2
(R.H.W. Nunney)

"... John Prescott, flanked by his wife..."
KIRSTY WARK, BBC 2
(Alison Spring)

"Even if he had scored for Alaves, it would have made no difference to the scoreline."
JERRY ARMSTRONG, Sky Sports
(Samuel Stevenson)

"The ball plunges up between the two of them as they meet."
Football Commentator, Radio 5 Live
(Michael O'Fee)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN

HERE'S A COUPLE OF FREE THEATRE TICKETS..
THANKS!
.. SAY I WAS WITH YOU. I'LL BE NEEDING AN ALIBI LATER.
UNDERSTOOD! HAHA!
NOW WE'LL GO AND BURGLE HIS HOUSE.

from Our Own Correspondent

IMAGINE a tropical island in which a handful of people battle it out against the elements and each other, with one winner left to pick up the most fabulous prize. Apparently it's been a TV disaster over there in Britain. Which seems strange to us here in the Seychelles, where we have been playing a real-life version of *Survivor* for 25 years.

This month we celebrated Independence Day and Liberation Day, the anniversary of the only partially bloody coup d'état that brought our own dear President Albert René to power. He is the real winner of the game. After Sir James Mancham was dumped from office all those years ago, we lived in a socialist paradise as a one-party state. And while we today remain vigilant about the evils of capitalism, we now enthuse about the democratic way.

So enthralled are we with our leader that we vote him back into power even now that we are allowed to support his opponents. Indeed, the combined forces of Mancham's Democratic Party and the Seychelles National Party led by Wavel Ramkalawan can only muster four seats out of 35 in our national assembly.

Quite frankly, when we hear Tony Blair talk about a "landslide", we laugh. Seychelles still remembers fondly the visit your first family made a couple of years ago, when the president graciously leant the Blairs one of his holiday homes on La Digue Island. It's a pretty little place, previously favoured as location by the director of a film called *Emmanuelle*. We were banking on the prime minister to spread the word about what a great place this is for a holiday. Results were disappointing (Anthea Turner, no less, honeymooned here not long ago), but we still live in hope.

In fact, all is not well in our coconut-fringed idyll. We've had a shortage of consumer goods in the shops. Nothing serious, just things like computer printer ink, disposable nappies, car parts and oh yes, loo paper. The president tells us that he's being pressurised by the IMF and World Bank to devalue our rupee, and he valiantly refuses to do so. He says the reason we're short of foreign exchange is because unscrupulous black marketeers are selling goods and services to tourists for hard currency instead of changing their money at the official rate.

Fortunately the president still has most things under control. He's got his friend and finance minister, James Michel, to run the Central Bank. Michel is the only one of the original coup plotters to remain in the cabinet. René has a soft spot for him. Michel is also minister for defence and the environment and vice-president.

We like to pull together in Seychelles and are proud of our results. We think we are the smallest country in the world to run a fully-fledged international airline. René's stepson is the chief executive. His other two stepsons are also helping out. One runs the Islands Development Company and the coconut farms. The other is in charge of tourism marketing. Then of course the president's wife does her bit by sitting on the board of Seychelles Broadcasting, so at least we know what we hear on the news is totally reliable.

Naturally we've already sent an official message of congratulations to your prime minister on his great victory. We're hoping he'll remember his old former socialist friends one of these days and offer us something a bit more concrete in the way of support. We know how it is when you look to prop up a failing currency while trying to modernise leftist principles. For in a game like ours, when one person keeps winning, there have to be a few losers.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

O "Floyd loved our mom very much, and vice versa," Evelyn Hightshoe told reporters who had gathered in a Minnesota graveyard, "and when she died, he told us he wanted to dig her grave as a final tribute. So he came out here early in the morning, on the day before her funeral, and spent the whole day digging. The whole family came over here in the afternoon to encourage him, and as he was chatting away to us, he collapsed and died. He's buried here, next to mom. My other brother Ray volunteered to dig Floyd's grave, but we wouldn't let him. It seemed too much like tempting fate." *(The Globe and Mail, 11/5/01. Spotter: Wallace Brown)*

— O —

O *"If they'd offered us sugar or sand, maybe we'd have kept quiet," Dr Yury Zotov told reporters in Vacha district hospital, in Russia's Nizhny Novogorod region, "but manure? I'm a surgeon, what do I need with manure? It's an insult."*

Dr Zotov was complaining on behalf of the hospital's three hundred workers, after the authorities decided to pay them their entire

monthly wages in dung. "We understand our country's economic problems, and we try to be reasonable. The Massandra vineyard in the Crimea has been paying its workers in bottles of wine for years, and the Podolsk sewing machine factory once paid everyone in sewing machines. But there's a limit to what workers will accept. When the government tried to pay Arkhangelsk lumberjacks with packets of tampons, they went on strike, and we're going to do the same, because we aren't prepared to work for shit wages. It's hard enough for me to feed my children on the 1,300 roubles a month I'm supposed to get paid, but this? We have a saying, 'when shit becomes valuable, the poor will be born without bumholes'."

But Vacha Mayor Alexander Abrosimov defended the offer of manure. "Maybe the associations are not pleasant, but it's a much-needed commodity for every resident. Many people survive on low wages by growing vegetables in garden plots or at their dachas, and we were trying to prevent them from becoming anxious about finding enough to feed their potatoes. Anyway, we are being paid in dung by local collective farms, who owe us money for tractor fuel, and we have to pass it on. Dr Zotov is psychologically sick. In fact, come to think of it, lately I've had a lot of psychologically sick people coming to my office to complain about being paid in manure." (Moscow Times, 15/5/01. Spotter: Charles Price)

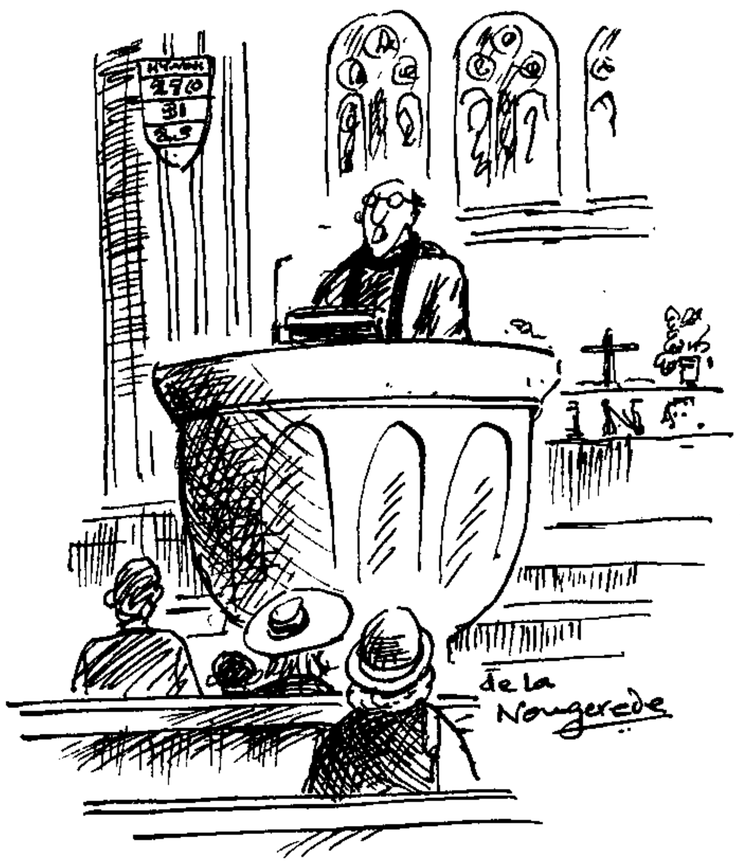
— O —

O "When I was at college, I never thought I'd end up affording an orang-utan personal relief by hand every morning," Mohd. Binatang told reporters as they followed him on his daily rounds at the Singapore Zoological Gardens. "And Ah Meng is the worst. He expects to be kissed on the neck first."

In between visits to the various cages, the curator of the zoo's sperm bank explained how he conducts his unusual profession. "We start so early in the morning because a lot of the animals have a 'morning glory' when they wake up, and it's easier to collect the sperm then. Each animal is different. The polar bears finish rather quickly, because they're not used to my warm hands on their cold organs. The chimpanzees always want to be hugged afterwards. The elephant is the most 'teruk' of all, because of the sheer size of its thing. Sometimes I have to use both my arms to tug on it. I feel like the bell ringer in a cathedral, like that Quasimodo or something, except it all ends in a snow scene."

After rubbing massage oil onto his rubber gloves, Binatang briefly disappeared into the orang-utan enclosure, where the resident was lying expectantly on his back, sporting a huge erection. When he emerged, he confessed that "as you might expect, this job is really ruining my sex life. I can't help it. These ejaculating hippos keep floating through my mind."

Lai Jee Seow of Wildlife Reserves Singapore also acknowledged that changes needed to be made to the zoo's semen collection procedures. "It's because the animals have gotten too used to Binatang coming over every morning to help them. Many of them now can't be bothered to engage in real sex." *(The Straits Times, 28/5/01. Spotter: John Toplis)*



"My text today is: I C E TRN IT OPN B4 ME"

TOP LABOUR MINISTER SCORES 0 OUT OF 5 IN RADIO QUIZ

by Our Political Staff **KAY BORN**

PRIME MINISTER Tony Blair came a mega-cropper when he appeared yesterday on Radio Neasden's "Five-Live" show and was asked a series of questions to test his knowledge of politics.

Here is the transcript of the question-and-answer session on yesterday's "Johnny Nerd Drive Time Quiz Break" that may bring down the government.

Nerd: Can you name the new Secretary of State for Transport, Local Government and the Regions?

Blair: Is it, er, Geoff Hoon? No, no, it's Alistair Darling. *(Real answer: Stephen Byers)*

Nerd: Can you name the new Leader of the House of Lords?

Blair: Is it still Margaret Jay? No, it must be Michael Heseltine. *(Real answer: Lord Williams of Mostyn)*

Nerd: What's the new name for the Ministry of Agriculture?

Blair: I know that one! It's foot-and-mouth, isn't it? Or is it UKIP? *(Real answer: DEATHRO)*

Nerd: How many Lib Dems have you got in your Cabinet?

Blair: Er, you've got me there. Is it three? *(Real answer: 0)*

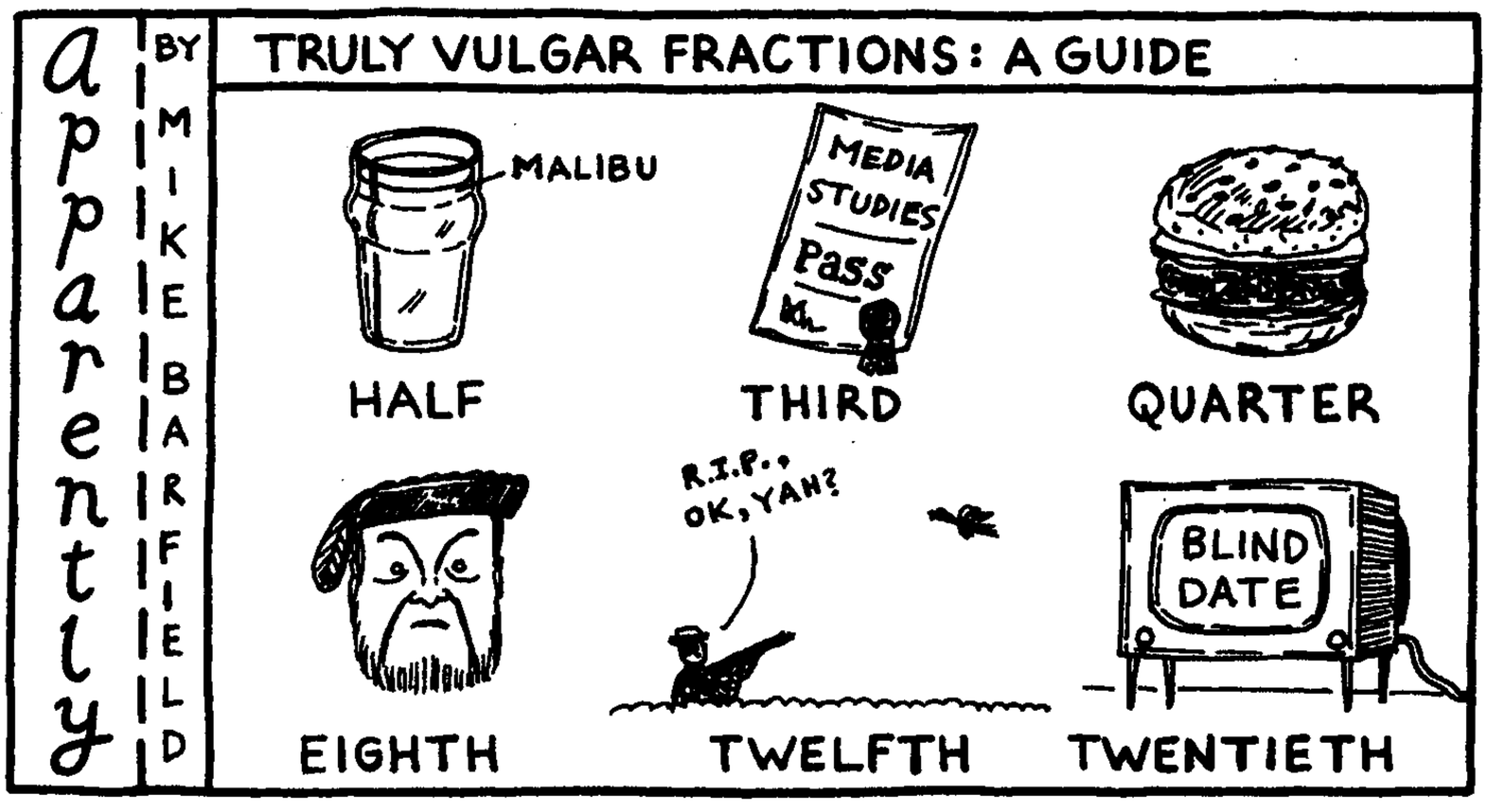
Nerd: Which party are you in?

Blair: That's easy! Manchester United... Tim Henman... er... Tiger Woods... Frankie Dettori... *(Real answer: New Labour)*

How did you fare in the "Blair Quiz"?

30 or More: You have an active sex life and are fulfilled in bed.

Under 30: You may have prostate cancer. See a doctor immediately before you die.



ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Brothers and Sisters!

A very warm welcome to this newsletter, particularly to all those new readers who may be coming to it for the first time after all the huge interest generated by the recent PCC elections!

The first point that I want to make loud and clear is that I am listening!

This is a listening parish with a listening vicar!

That is why I was so upset when our recent oecumenical meeting in Gothenburg (a lovely city by the way!) was ruined by the antics of a tiny minority of 20,000 hooligans intent on making trouble.

There was no excuse at all for this display of childish anarchy, and it was totally untrue to suggest, as some people did, that we churchmen have lost touch with ordinary people and spend all our time swanning around from one conference to another.

All I can see is that this is an outrageous lie, and I do not want to hear it again from anyone!

As for being out of touch, I can be contacted at any time of day or night on my website, www.tbnewlab.org.uk

Or you can contact my secretary Mrs Hunter ('Anji') by writing to her at the vicarage, and she will make sure that you receive a printed acknowledgement in no more than six weeks!

And what nonsense these silly demonstrators were shouting. I saw one banner which read "You cannot serve God and Mammon". How offensive that was to the hard-working members of our business community, and how right the Swedish police were to shoot them in the back!

But enough of these tiresome distractions from the real business of how I am getting on with running the parish over the next five years.

Obviously, there is not enough space here to describe my plans in detail. But here are some of the main points:

1. The PCC has unanimously agreed to increase my stipend by £60,000 a year in recognition of my heavy workload (and may I remind some of you that I said "no" to a pay increase over the past four years, when a lot of people [ie, teachers, nurses, etc] had whopping 1.5 percent performance-related pay increases!).

2. To look really closely at a lot of things which need attention and to make sure that we get these things right as soon as possible, with the aid of our local business community who have so much to contribute (and not just to our parish funds!).

3. Look, I said there wasn't enough space to go into detail. But it's all on the vicarage website, so if you want to know

all the rest, just "log on" now! ("Log on" being the old Greek word for "website".)

As we sing in the chorus at evensong, to the tune of that wonderful old football hymn:

Log on, log on, with hope in your heart,
And you'll never be alone.
You'll always be with Tone!

100 INTERNET HYMNS FOR TODAY

Your cyberfriend!

Tony

MR PRESCOTT WRITES FROM THE WORKING MEN'S CLUB

It is completely untrue to say that I have been demoted in some way in the recent reshuffle of PCC responsibilities. On the contrary, the Vicar has personally asked me to write a 1000-word piece for this newsletter on my vital new role organising all the administrational affairs of

The Editor reserves the right to cut all pieces on the grounds of space, particularly those from people who have been demoted. A.C.

To Remember In Your Prayers

...Mrs Hoey, who did such a good job of messing up our parish sports day and is now going round claiming that she was unfairly sacked from her job on the PCC. Let us pray that Mrs Hoey loses the power of speech for a while, to teach her a lesson in humility that she will not forget! T.B.

Millennium Tent Update

Following the recent PCC elections, it has been decided that we should draw a line under the problems of the Millennium Tent. In future, there will be no mention of the Tent in these pages ever again, particularly not the fact that it is still unsold, is costing £1 million a week to parish funds and has recently been made the subject of a "Dangerous Structure Notice". T.B.

Scenes from Parish History

Thanks to Mr Bagnall for finding this old print which encapsulates everything that used to be wrong with the parish in the bad old days last century!! T.B.

FORTHCOMING TALKS WITH SLIDES

A number of PCC members have kindly agreed to give talks on their new areas of responsibility.

- **Mrs Beckett will talk about the countryside under the title "Through A Caravan Window".**
- **Mr Byers will talk about "My First Car, Which I Will Buy As Soon As I Learn To Drive".**
- **Mr Caborn is hoping to give a talk on sport when he has completed his Open University course on the subject!**

The new PCC gets down to business – and look how many women there are!! Especially near the camera! Well done to all you ladies! T.B.

That Glasgow Honorary Degree In Full

SALUTAMUS CAROLUM, PRINCIPUS GALLORUM, FILIUS BRENDA REGINA ET PHILLIPUS GRAECUM, CONSORTUS ADULTERUS CAMILLA, OFFICIUM LEGOVERA TAMPAXICA BRITTANICA.

AGRICOLA ORGANICUS ET ARTEFACTUS AQUAE COLORAE PISSPORUS ET CONFABULATOR CUM FLORIBUS ET ARBORIS, ET ADMIRATOR FANATICUS GOONORUM CUM NEDDUS SEAGOONUS ET ECCLUS ET YING TONG IDDLAE PO ET CETERA ET CETERA.

DEPLORUM ARCHITECTO MODERNO DICTUM FAMOSUM "GIGANTICUS CARBUNCULUM", AMICO ET MENTORI LORENZO VAN DER POSTICO ET DOCTORUS BARKWORTH *(QUIS HIC? ED.)*.

SED PARTICULARI CELEBRATUS UXOR INFIDELIS DIANAE, EX-REGINA CORDAE ET PRINCIPESSA POPULIS ET ICONIS BELLISSIMA TRAGICO MORTUM CANDELARUM IN VENTO ET CETERA ET CETERA.

CAROLUM ERIT NUMQUAM REX.

Universitatis Glaswegiensis MMI.

Another Taxi Driver Writes A Novel

This Week **Garry Bushell** (Cab No. 309472)

Chapter One

Blimey Guv! See the pair of jugs on that bird over there by the crossing? Wouldn't mind giving her one!

Chapter Two

Them asylum seekers? What a bloody cheek – coming over here and shaggin' our women. That's my job!

Chapter Three

This country's gone to the dogs. All people think about is sex. Cor!! Look at the legs on that one pushing a pram. 'Er legs go right up to 'er whatsit.

Chapter Four

You ever written a novel, guv? Nothing to it. I've got my one 'ere. I'll sign it for you, if you like. No? You foreign or what?

Chapter Five

I 'ad that Dirty Desmond in the back of the cab. What a gent. He could do a lot of good for this country. Like give me a job.

Chapter Six

See this tattoo? If I move my arm, you can see that underneath the bird's tits it says "Vote UKIP". Clever innit? *(That's enough. Ed.)*

NEXT WEEK: Tony Parsons (Cab No. 757324).

OUTRAGE OVER BULGER RELEASE

by Our Overkiller Staff **Phil Paper**

THERE was universal horror across Britain yesterday following the release into the tabloids of hundreds of articles about James Bulger's killers into the community.

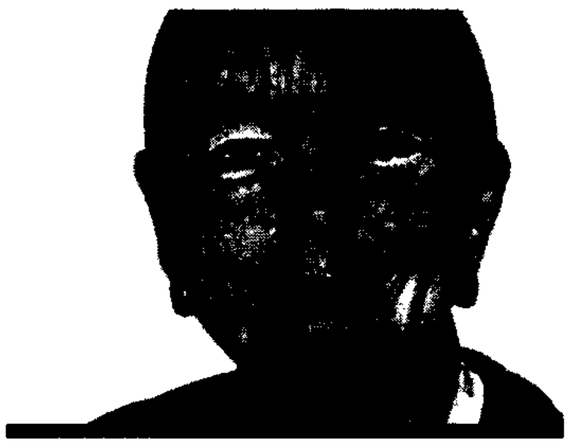
"Despite the time that has passed since the terrible murder, these articles still seem almost childlike in the way the issues are laid out, revealing virtually no signs of maturity whatsoever," said one worried journalist. "Their arguments aren't near fully developed, and you can't hide the fact that people will search these salacious comment pieces out no matter how well hidden away in the features sections they are.

"Let's just hope the identity of the journalists responsible can be kept secret for the sake of their careers."

© The Sun, The Official Big Bulger Paper

Daily Mail Special

I'm Full Of Hate, Anger And Shit



says **Lynda Lee Potter** in an Exclusive Interview with Herself

THE WORLD I live in is a world of hatred, anger and fear. Will I be sacked by the editor? Or will I be allowed to continue writing this rubbish every day?

My face tells the story – it is lined with grief, anguish and misery.

There is only one thing that keeps me going – the thought of the large cheques I earn by coming up with this drivel.

Anger. Hate. Shit. That is my world. Will I ever be able to lead a normal life again? Will I ever be able to smell a rose or see the sunset without writing 800 words on "Roses – don'tchahate'em?" and "Why can't sunsets leave us alone?" I do not ask for pity. I just want more money.

© Lynda Lee Potty.

Should Foster The Vulture Get Early Release?

FEARS were growing that after only eight hours in captivity Foster the vulture was to be released with a new identity as a Turkey.

There was public outrage as a group of vultures gathered outside *(cont'd. p. 94)*

BBC2 HIGHLIGHTS

The History of Beards Pt. 94

The Beard comes to Britain

TONIGHT's episode features hitherto unseen footage of men with beards in a pub in Erith. Watch out for the extraordinary jam session at the Lamb and Flag where George Stubble (clarinet) teams up with Monty Goatee (trumpet) and Humphrey Whiskers (washboard) who formed the now legendary Hot Beard Trio of Blackheath

"I had a religious experience"

"Yeah, I work from home – how could you tell?"

NEW BBC SERIES

9.00 Monday BBC1

Chalk and Cheese

(concluding episode 9.00 Tuesday BBC1)

NEW original crime series with Inspector Chalk and Detective Sergeant Cheese. Dave Chalk is an old-style maverick copper who likes to break the rules, wherease Sally Cheese is a play-it-by-the-book fast-track graduate. Chalk is an alcoholic divorcé with a gay son and a complicated private life. Cheese is a working mother married to an inner city vicar and has to balance new baby with life in the elite NR7 squad. Can Chalk and Cheese resolve their differences and solve the Chinese triad drug-trafficking child abuse murder robbery case? Who cares? Starring Ricky Tomlinson as Inspector Chalk and Sarah Lancashire as DS Cheese. Watch out for Ross Kemp playing Robson Green.

9.00 Wednesday BBC1

Fire and Ice

(concluding episode Thursday BBC1)

NEW original crime series starring Trevor Eve as Chief Inspector Derek Ice who teams up with senior pathologist Dr Hilary Fire (Samantha Bond) to solve the cases that are too boring for all the other police series to take on. Watch out for cameos by Ricky Tomlinson as Police Commissioner Robert Salt and his psychological profiler Dr Melissa Pepper, played by Sarah Lancashire.

Will they crack the mystery of how to fill in a couple of hours of midweek television without the public switching over? Watch out for Robson Jerome as Kemp Ross.

Eye rating: Z / / / / / Cars was better.

Corruption Among Judges Of First School Art Competition

05/04/2001 **-- Our investigative reporter has revealed a scandle amongst a Coquet Park First School art competition. It became apparent that judges were obviously bribed when it was seen that the winning artworks were actually crap.**

Whitley Bay Citizen Web site

Daily Mail, Friday, June 29, 2001

Why It's Time To Have It Cut

by Daily Thomas of the David Mail *(Surely vice-versa? Ed.)*

THERE COMES a time in every man's life when he has to face the facts. It's getting too long and it's too thin. Yes, I am talking about my article in the Mail.

Every day I wake up and look at it staring back at me. 800 words on Beckham's haircut, my haircut, my children's haircuts, my children's schools, why I moved to the country, why I've got a dog, why I haven't got a dog – you know the stuff.

But let's be honest – it's not the flowing, trendy, youthful piece it used to be. In fact, it looks rather silly. So, folks, I'm taking the only honest decision a 40-something journo can take. I'm cutting it off right here!

© *David Thomas, the Daily Mail Menopause*

BABY 'IS OWN FATHER'

by Our Medical Staff
Dr Frank N. Stein

IN AN extraordinary scientific breakthrough, doctors in a Californian clinic have produced a baby by using its own foetal tissue to self-fertilise its reproductive cells in IVF conditions using the DNA from a GM soya bean. ***(Is this right? Ed.)***

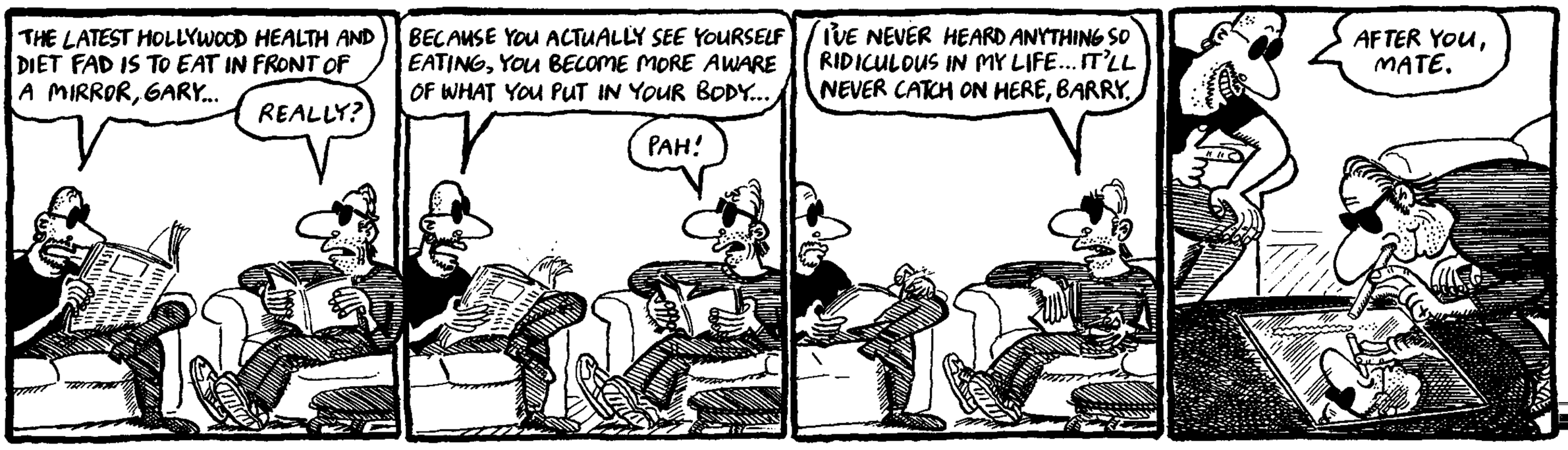
"It's amazing," said Dr Stein. "Baby X is his own father, brother, sister, mother, cousin and vegetable patch.

"This pioneering technique," he continued, "will benefit nobody at all but we have the technology and we have proved that it can be done."

Proud father Baby X was unavailable for comment last night as he is undergoing a sex change operation followed by surgery for breast implants and *(That's enough medicine. Ed.)*

Celeb

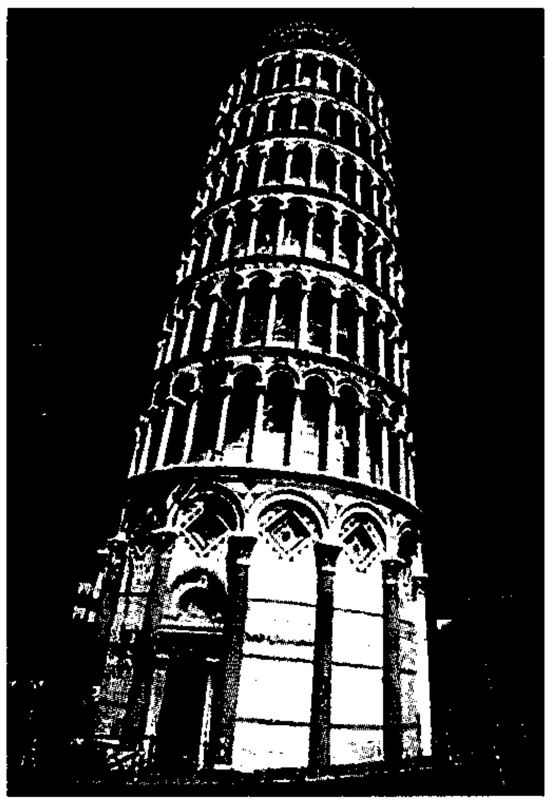
LIGGER


THE LATEST HOLLYWOOD HEALTH AND DIET FAD IS TO EAT IN FRONT OF A MIRROR, GARY...
REALLY?
BECAUSE YOU ACTUALLY SEE YOURSELF EATING, YOU BECOME MORE AWARE OF WHAT YOU PUT IN YOUR BODY...
PAH!
I'VE NEVER HEARD ANYTHING SO RIDICULOUS IN MY LIFE... IT'LL NEVER CATCH ON HERE, BARRY.
AFTER YOU, MATE.

The Pisa Times

Friday June 29 2001

NEW EFFORTS TO SAVE TOTTERING OLD STRUCTURE FROM COLLAPSE



by Our Architectural Staff
RENEE SANCE

ONE OF Britain's most historic sites, the leaning Conservative Party, was in danger of falling over completely last night despite efforts to save it.

Experts agreed that in recent years the party had begun to lean dangerously to the right and was in need of correcting. Said Spanish engineer Michael Portillo, "If we don't return it to the centre, the whole thing will end up as a pile of rubble. I think it should be straight – though being slightly bent in the past is obviously fine by me."

The problem has been exacerbated by the previous intervention of English engineer William Hague who tried to correct the lean by pulling the structure even further to the right. This failed miserably and led to the closure of the party to the general public.

Campo di Oldbooti

"No one wants to go into the party any more," said Mr Portillo. "It's just too scary. But I have taken some soundings and I can return it to its former glory when it will be reopened as the NOT Leaning Tower of Labour."

GORDON BROWN'S NEW EURO ENTRY CRITERIA IN FULL

1 The Devil riding past your window to work on a skateboard...
2 Hell freezing over...
3 Er... that's it.

LATE SPORTS NEWS

THERE was shock yesterday when an outbreak of cricket briefly interrupted the crowd trouble at Trent Bridge.

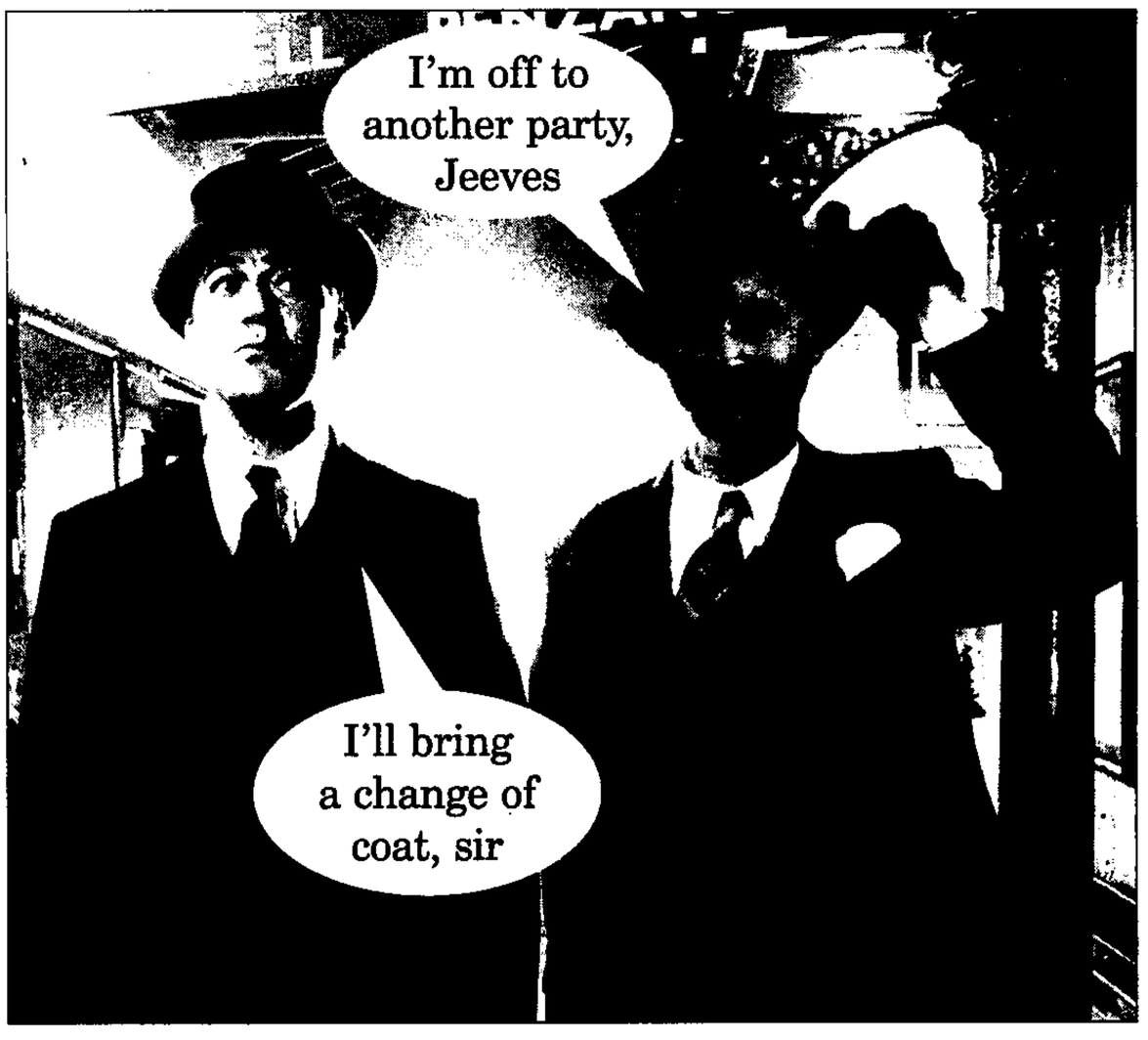
"Don't these players realise we're here to set off fireworks, invade the pitch and stomp on defenceless stewards' heads, not to watch them play some silly bat and ball game?" said one disgusted knife-wielding... *(cont. p. 94)*

Seven foreigners, seven locals up each other at Wotulo Memorial

Indonesian Observer

"Cheque OK?"

JEEVES AND WOODWARD



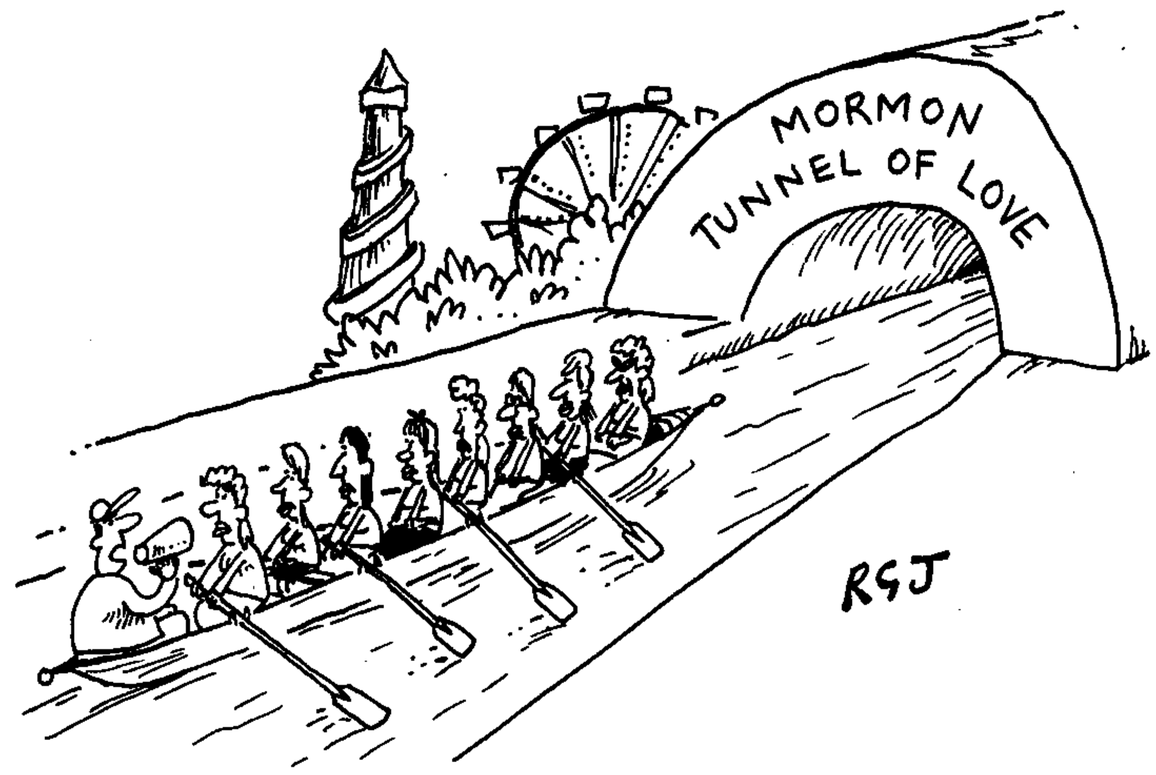
Telegraph Fashion From Ascot

by Hilary Alexandra-Schulman

Lucy Nobby-Blonde in a silk dress by Fruti Kleevage and a Zilli hat.

Mrs Iama Mutton-Drestaz-Lamb in a Tuyung Foriu dress and a hat by Stoopede.

Mr Tristram Twerp sporting an embroidered waistcoat by Gitt with traditional topper from Snobbs & Crooks of Savile Row. *(That's enough silly Asscot. Ed.)*



CHANCELLOR CONFIRMS COMPETITION SHAKE-UP

by Our Westminster Reporter **Carl Tel**

GORDON BROWN has announced radical changes in the amount of competition he'll be showing towards Tony Blair.

"In the past, cosy backroom deals between the Prime Minister and myself have meant that the public has been forced to endure artificially inflated levels of friendship between us," admitted the Chancellor. "But now that the election is in the bag during our second term, I can assure the public that they'll be seeing greatly reduced levels of co-operation between us over issues such as the Euro, as I jockey for position to beat Blunkett to his job.

"I'm willing to pay any price for that."

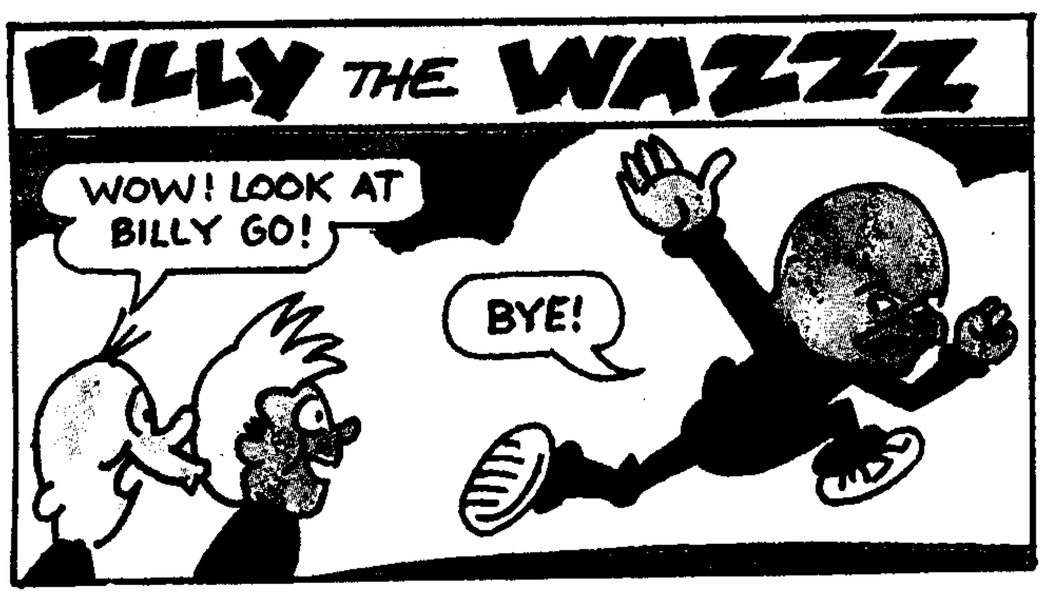
Gordon Brown is 74 (times more likely to be our next Prime Minister than David Davies).

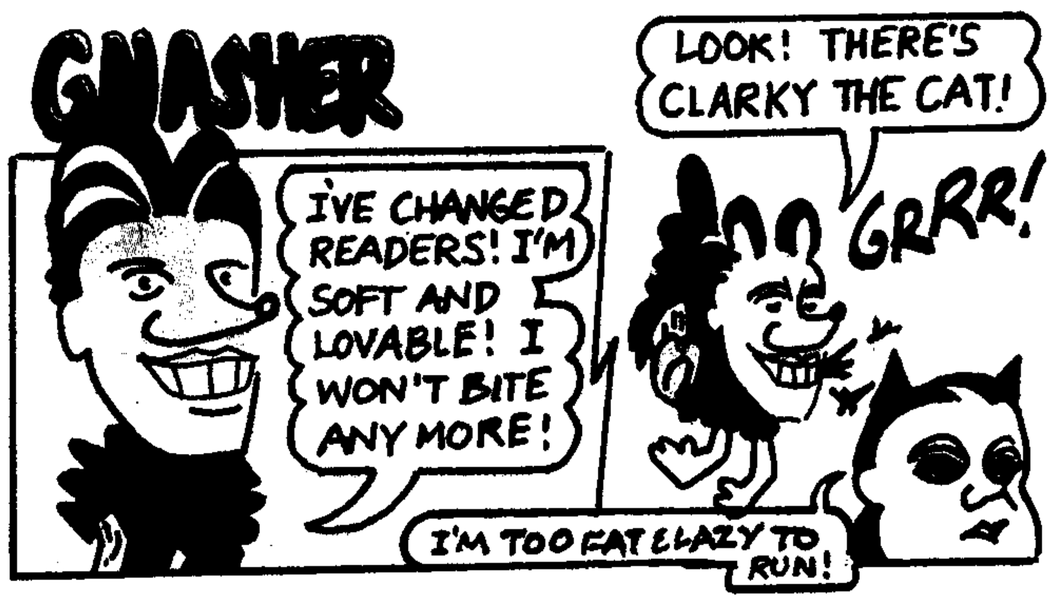
Great Bores of Today
No. 94

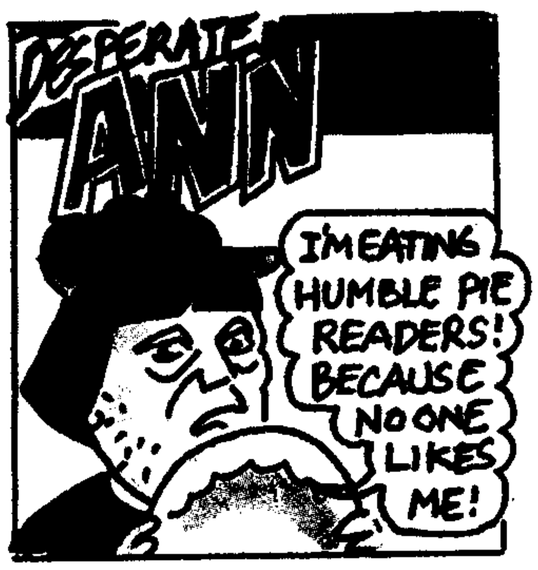
"…did you see the honours list they gave one to that cartoonist chap Michael Heath I don't understand it I mean a lot of people do what he does there are loads of cartoonists everywhere you look there's the one you like who does all the politicians then there's the one who's got that very short name what's he called? and what about the chap you used to commute with when he lived down here for a short time before he left his wife I used to like his stuff it was terribly funny I had a photocopy of one on the fridge door d'you remember this man was saying something to his wife no I suppose Heath must have done some charity work that's why they usually give them honours didn't he used to do something in Private Eye you know the bores-thing about someone rabbiting on about something really boring that they didn't know anything about do you remember Jeremy really liked it I never really saw the point of it the way it went on and on and just fizzled out…"

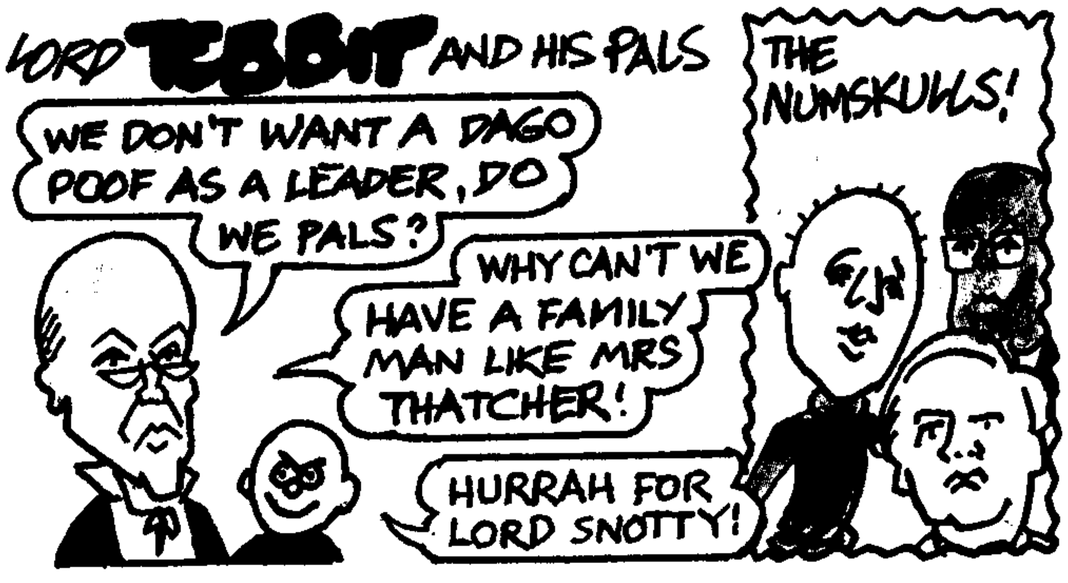
THE HAS-BEANO WITH BORIS THE MENACE

I KNOW!! I'LL EMBARRASS MR BLAIR BY WRITING RUDE THINGS ABOUT HIM IN MY COMIC!
THE SPECTATOR
MR BLAIR SNEEZES!
MR BLAIR IS A ROTTER!
MR BLAIR IS DEEPLY UNSOUND ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION!!!








LORD TUBBIT AND HIS PALS
WE DON'T WANT A DAGO POOF AS A LEADER, DO WE PALS?
WHY CAN'T WE HAVE A FAMILY MAN LIKE MRS THATCHER!
HURRAH FOR LORD SNOTTY!
THE NUMSKULLS!

ME AND MY SPOON

THIS WEEK

SIR NICHOLAS SEROTA

I suppose the design of a spoon must be very important to you?

It is the only thing that matters. It's what I call the three Ds: design, design, design.

So, I would guess that antique spoons do not feature much in your world?

They're very limited. Very predictable. Very dull.

So, your spoons have to be cutting edge?

No, those are my knives. There's a different principle behind a knife!

Do you keep your spoons in a drawer?

No definitely not. A spoon needs space to tell you about itself.

Do you consider that a spoon can constitute a true work of art?

It depends what you mean by a "true work of art". Anyone who looks at a spoon and calls it a spoon has totally missed the point. All spoons are in a sense a comment on the nature of "spoon-ness".

So, does a spoon make a statement?

You're not listening. I think I've just made that clear.

Do you have a favourite spoon?

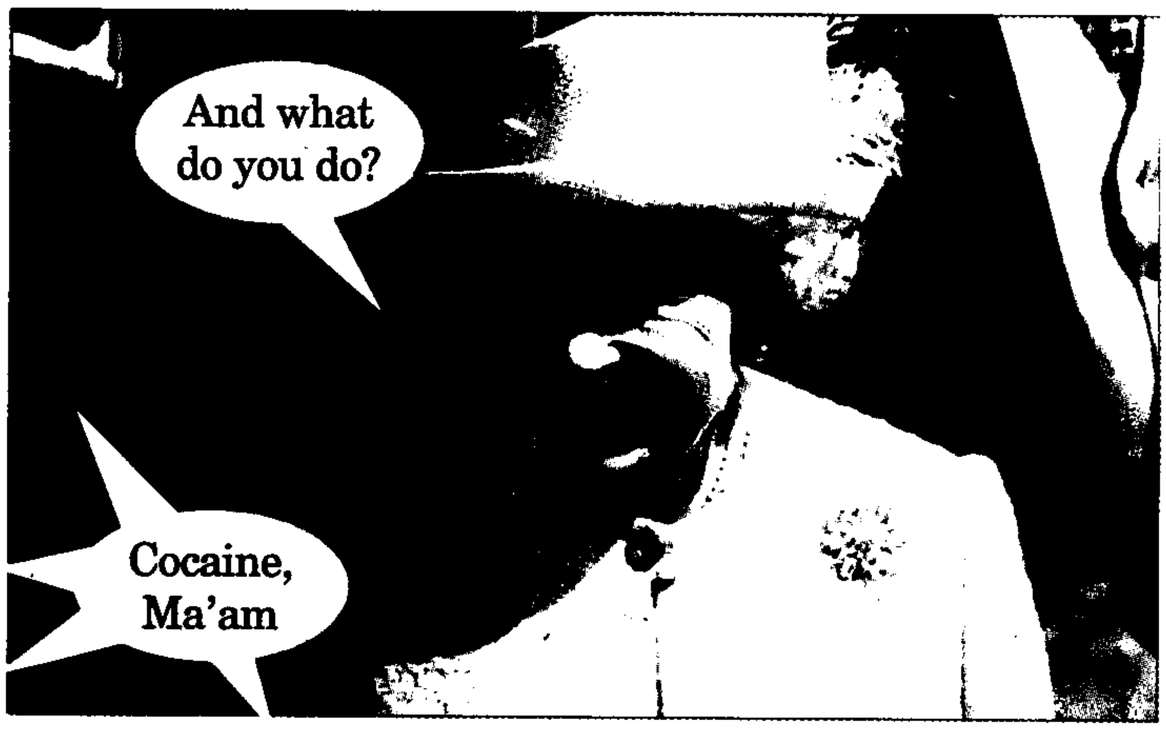
Yes, very much so. It is one I was given last week by next year's Turner Prize winner. It's made of cotton wool.

Has anything amusing ever happened to you?

No.

NEXT WEEK: Sir Tom Stoppard on "Me and My Toothbrush".

ASCOT SHOCK



DANDO CASE LATEST

DAY 94

THE COURT heard from the defence that the fatal bullet responsible for the death of the television presenter had been of a type used by Serbian hit squads in the former Yugoslavia.

Furthermore, said Mr Michael Mousemat QC, Counsel for the defendant, Mr Bulgaria, of Womble Road, Fulham, the bullet case in question could well have had imprinted on it the legend "Made in Serbia, the property of Mr S. Milosevic esq, War Criminal and International Terrorist".

Mr Mousemat then cross-examined Inspector "Knacker of the Yard" Knacker, the head of the murder investigation.

Mousemat: I put it to you, Inspector Knacker, that the link between my client and Mr Milosevic is indeed a slender one?

Knacker: Ah, but that's why he's so clever. He could be pretending to be a Serbian hit man and have gone off to Yugoslavia to buy the murder weapon in order to throw us off the scent.

Mr Justice Cocklecarrot: Is there any evidence to support these allegations, Inspector?

Knacker: Indeed, your honour, I have here a speck of Yugoslavian dust so small that it is invisible to the naked eye. Perhaps the jury would like to take a closer look at it?

Cocklecarrot: You'll have to do better than that, Inspector.

Knacker: Thank you, Your Honour, We in the force are like the Mounties, your honour. We always get our man. Even if occasionally it is the wrong one.

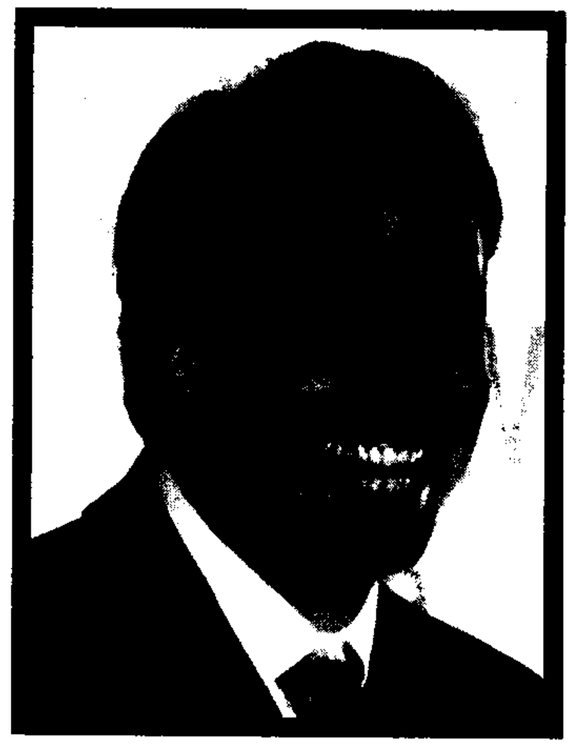
(Cont. Court 94)

Exclusive to all newspapers

FICTIONAL CHARACTER ON TELEVISION SHOW DIES

- **p. 2-17** Interviews with old actress describing the trauma of pretending to die.
- **p. 18-35** Pictures of the old actress which show she isn't in fact dead but was only pretending.
- **p. 94** Scores of real people die in Ecuador landslides.

NEW TORY LEADERSHIP CANDIDATE



"No, we never see the people next door – they both work nights"

The Daily Telegraph

Est 1855

The Future of Britain At Stake

Let us be in no doubt that the decision about to be made by the Conservative Party as to who should be their leader and standard bearer in the years which lie ahead is one on which the very survival of our country may depend.

Let us survey the various candidates for this awesome responsibility. Undoubtedly, the front-runner is Mr Michael Xavier Pooftillo, a man of undoubted talent and undeniable charisma, who has many of the more obvious qualifications which are essential to the job of leading a new, inclusive, modern Conservative Party. Unfortunately, some doubts remain about Mr Pooftillo's judgement, particularly where some of the murkier episodes in his past personal life are concerned.

No one is of course for a moment suggesting that the Conservative Party should be so blinkered by prejudice and narrow bigotry that it could not countenance the election of a leader who is not only a foreigner, but also a self-confessed shirt-lifter to boot. Nevertheless, the time may not yet have come for the Party to be entirely wholehearted in support of a man who, in less tolerant regions of the world, might well find himself being strung-up.

Then there is the question of Mr Kenneth Clarke. There can be no denying that he is a man of towering talent, huge charisma and undoubted popular appeal across the board. In addition, he is personable, normal and has a wide range of interests outside the narrow world of politics, including jazz and selling cigarettes to Vietnamese peasants – an admirable commercial enterprise for a business-friendly Conservative candidate. In fact, if it came to the matter of foreign fags, then one might be tempted to say that Mr Clarke is certainly preferable to Mr Portillo. However, joking apart, it is an inescapable fact that, despite his many outstanding qualifications for the job of leader, Mr Clarke is idle, fat, lazy and a supporter of Britain's entry into the euro. None of these points should immediately disbar Mr Clarke, except the last.

No One Is Reading This

We now come to the outsiders, Mr Iain Duncan Smith and the other one whose name escapes us at this juncture. Both of these men are undoubtedly extremely able, heterosexual Euro-sceptics and this alone should be enough to win them the support of all rational, patriotic, centre-right-thinking Conservatives.

Sadly, however, it has to be conceded that Mr Duncan Smith's lack of hair would lead to electoral disaster on an unprecedented scale. As for the man whose name we cannot remember, despite his impressive track record and command of whatever it is that he is supposed to have done, the major problem remains that we cannot remember his name.

All in all, it is a difficult and sobering choice. Confronted with this glittering galaxy of talent, there are no doubt some who would say that each of them has an equal claim to the Conservative Party's support. There are others who might wish to commend the claims of someone who has not yet placed his hat in the ring. As editor of this newspaper, I myself have argued on the Today programme that by far the best man for the job would be Mr David Trimble, who is shortly due to resign from his present position and would therefore be available to answer the call to lead the Tory Party, were it to come. But then I am mad.

No, in the circumstances, there is only one candidate to whom the Daily Telegraph can give its unequivocal support. We refer, of course, to Baroness Thatcher, who can lay convincing claim to being the most modern, inclusive and caring leadership candidate of them all, and whose views on the need for the European Union to be destroyed by Mr Bush's laser-guided Star Wars missile would command respect from all sections of the Party.

Letters to the Editor

The Decline In Modern Cricket

SIR – To those of us who have been out East and seen a thing or two, there is nothing new in the disgraceful scenes recently re-enacted on some of our leading cricket grounds as play was brought to an abrupt halt when the field was invaded by hordes of over-excited supporters from the Indian sub-continent.

I well remember a match in Hindujastan shortly before the last war, when the Viceroy's XI (Captain H. Gussett, 17th/21st Balti Volunteers) was playing a visiting team from the northern Punjab, the Fallalabad Ticket Collectors XI. Replying to the visitors' first innings total of 721 for 2 declared, we were making a spirited fight back on 12 for 6, when the Viceroy's ADC, Major Harry 'Toppo' Thompson, was bowled middle stump and gallantly refused to walk on the grounds that the delivery had been a no-ball. In this he was supported by the umpire, his junior officer Captain Bertram "Bertie" Berkmann.

It was at this juncture that over 30,000 enraged natives, high on the local *boxwalla* leaf (or bunji, as it is known), swarmed onto the pitch intent on reversing the umpire's decision.

Fortunately, disaster was averted by the prompt action of the watching Viceroy, Viscount Chadlington (later the Earl of Gummer), who ordered a batallion of the McDonald's Highlanders (the 'Whoppers') to open fire from a battery of quarter-pounders concealed behind the sightscreen.

Once the several thousand casualties had been cleared from the field, play was resumed, and we had no more trouble from pitch invasions, on this or any subsequent occasion.

Readers may incidentally be interested to know that Major Thompson went on to make 463 not out, taking the Viceroy's XI to a well deserved victory by 4 wickets.

H. GUSSET

The Old Pavilion, Arlott St John, Dorset.

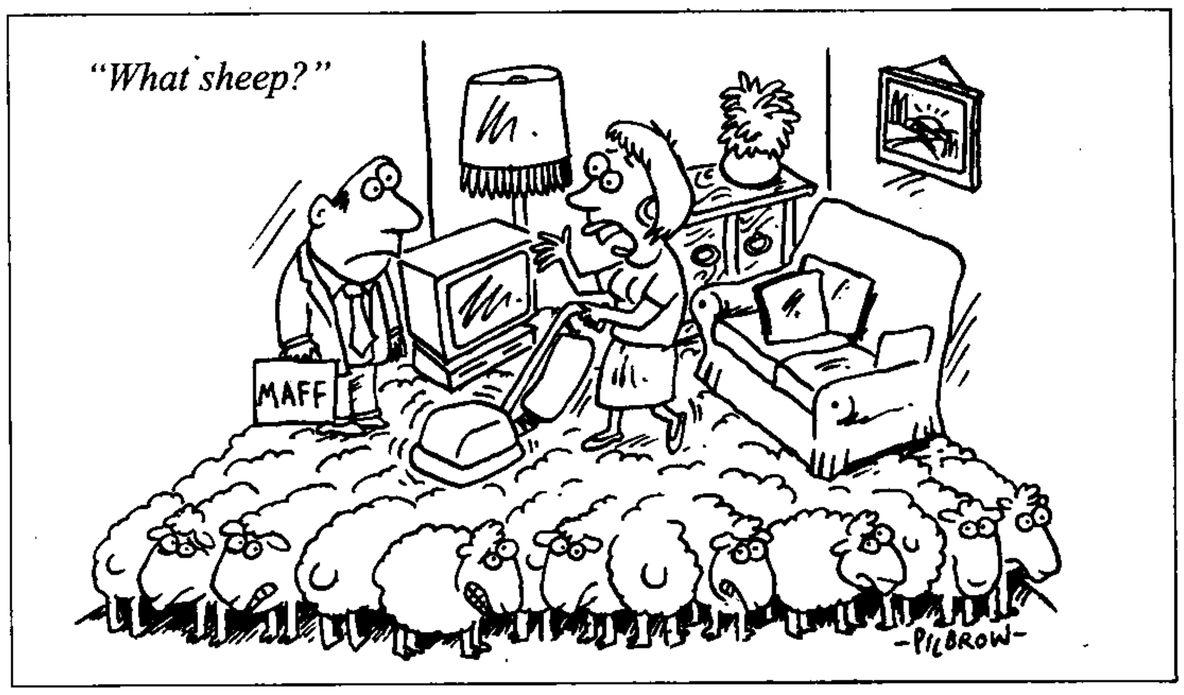
Late Hat In Ring

BY OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT
PETER OBORE

THE entry of Michael Ancram into the leadership contest reminds us that the old-fashioned gentleman Tory is by no means extinct. Behind his old world charm and old school tie, Ancram is an accomplished aristorcat with a number of fine suits in his wardrobe. The young Ancram once saw the late Sir Alec Douglas Home on a railway station which made a lasting impression on him and he decided then and there to emulate the "gentil parfait 14th Earl of Home" and enter Conservative politics "in order to serve his country".

Unlike his other rivals, Ancram is too well-bred to entertain ambition in any form – he would simply like to become leader of the Tory party and then Prime Minister.

Ancram, the heir to the Earl of Muppet and grandson of the Duke of Cartilage, is a welcome relief from the seedy go-getters and grammar school oiks ranged against him.



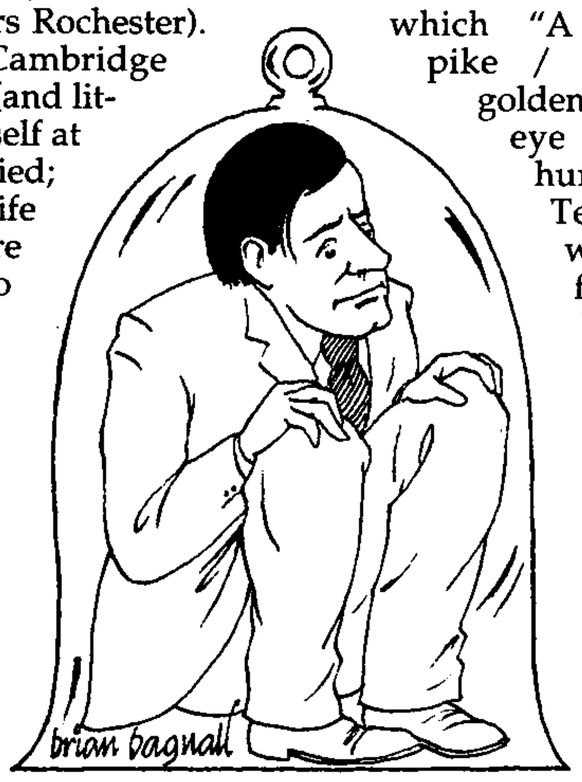
Literary Review

Tennant's bitter

The Ballad of Sylvia and Ted
Emma Tennant
(Mainstream, £12.99)

BIRTHDAY Letters a bit obscure? The Bell Jar too depressing? Letters Home too long? Never mind: the Tennant's Lite version will satisfy your thirst for prurient gossip without any of the bitter moral aftertaste which lesser brews impart. And after all, the story was just made for a cheap novelette.

The story is, of course, that of Ted Hughes (portrayed here as a cross between Heathcliff in a dirty mac and Alan Clark without the furniture), and Sylvia Plath (a mixture of Rebecca and a less complaisant Mary Archer, with a mad dash of the first Mrs Rochester). They meet at Cambridge where she literally (and literarily) throws herself at him; they get married; they're poor and life is hard but they're geniuses so who cares?



And then he starts seeing Assia Wevill (a name you'd think was contrived in a real work of fiction), who drives a pregnant wedge between them. So Sivvy tops herself and later so does Assia, and Ted. Well Ted goes on to greater things, including (according to her earlier book, Burnt Diaries) an affair with Tennant herself.

This tale has love, death and poetry in it but sadly not much sex. This is surprising since its author presumably knows what the former laureate is like in the sack. So while there are plenty of rather dubious and awkward passages in this book, none will be a candidate for the Literary Review's Bad Sex Award.

By awkward I mean the sort of overladen buffet-platter sentences that go: "Sylvia holds her knowledge, her icy knowledge of the fact of Assia's baby, within like an icicle, a poison-tipped needle, as she seeks and finds a taxi, gives the address in a clipped, matter-of-fact tone."

As for dubious, diehard fans and completists will have fun playing Where Did That Bit Come From? "It was queer, sultry summer, the summer they electrocuted the Rosenbergs. I couldn't help wondering what it would be like, being burned alive all along your nerves." That was poetic Plath in The Bell Jar; and this is prosaic Tennant: "She thinks of the death by electrocution this summer of the Rosenbergs... and she feels her nerves shriek."

In Dreamers, a poem in Birthday Letters, Hughes says of Assia: "She fascinated you" and describes her dream in which "A giant fish, a pike / Had a globed, golden eye, and in that eye / a throbbing human foetus." Tennant duly writes: "'You're fascinated by her,' Ted said, triumphant," and twice mentions Assia's dream about "a great golden fish" and the "half-formed child that throbs within its eye."

In Letters Home Sylvia's mother, Aurelia Plath, describes the circumstances of her daughter's 1953 suicide attempt: "Propped against a bowl of flowers on the dining room table was a note in Sylvia's handwriting: 'Have gone for a long walk. Will be home tomorrow'." Tennant cleverly varies not just the wording but the facts too: "The letter is propped against a bowl on the table in the hall. Sylvia is going for a long walk. Not to be waited for. Perhaps not back until the next day."

No doubt similar echoes are also to be found in last year's doorstopping Journals of Sylvia Plath 1950-1962. And yes, of course you'd expect a book based on a true story to fit (or rehash) the facts. But this is supposed to be a novel. That calls for some exercise of the imagination. Yet the most disappointing feature of this book is its utter failure to get inside the head of either of its main characters. Given that her protagonists have already bared their souls in their own , this little tome seems doubly redundant.

Like a sort of literary vampire, Tennant feeds on the blood of dead writers, ghosting forth sequels and parallel versions of existing works by Austen, Stevenson, Hardy and others.

Nor is her own work immune, for here we find a cannibalised version of the tale of Procne, wife of Tereus, king of Thrace, which Tennant first "retold" in a story, Philomela, published in the literary magazine Bananas (editor, Emma Tennant) back in the 1970s. There's also some stuff about witches and wolves of the sort which Angela Carter did much better in The Company of Wolves (also, curiously enough, published in Bananas).

Occasional highbrow references to Persephone, Clytemnestra, Oedipus, Echo and Narcissus, not to mention middlebrow mystic guff about the Tibetan Book of the Dead, Tarot cards and ouija boards, cannot displace the book's overall air of lowbrow, catchpenny shoddiness (or "shodditude", as Tennant herself might put it). But although I said earlier that the story was just made for a cheap novelette, what I suspect actually passed through Tennant's (or her agent's) mind was that it was just made for the movies. Based on a true story! Only who would get the royalties for this real life melodrama? The estates of Plath and Hughes? Or Emma Tennant for her daring and original cut 'n' paste job?

The best that can be said for this parasitical confection is that it might just succeed in uniting those implacably warring parties, the Sylviaphiles and the Teddites — in harmonious condemnation.

Quote Of The Week

■ NOVELIST Richard Littlejohn on Radio 5 was asked by Will Self if his book "turned into Tolstoy" after the 200 pages that Self had read before giving up.

"No, it doesn't turn into Tolstoy," said Littlejohn. "It doesn't set out to be Tolstoy. It's a much more complex book than that."

WHAT YOU DIDN'T MISS, Pt 94

Marie Antoniafraser
by Mrs Pinter

THE new year of 1776 produced climactic conditions of unprecedented severity. Mist rose. Fog enveloped. Snow fell. Ancient sledges, their harnesses sedulously polished, their runners gleamingly refurbished, were prettily sent forth to bowl once more over the roads near Versailles. Yet ensconced in her sylvan bower, solitary, detached from both maternal caresses and husbandly affection, Marie Antoinette knew that in her heart there burned an unquenchable flame. The flame of Venus.

This flame did not, however, resemble the amorous conflagrations so wantonly stoked by less discreet members of the royal entourage, those bold females of whom the memorialist Baron d'Armagnac remarked "levity distinguished their affiliations as brevity distinguished their wit". The Comte de Frou-frou, a venerable thirteenth lord of the powder closet and hereditary bearer of the rouge pot, was typical of the kind of older man who appealed to the young Queen as an amusing companion. Such, in fact, was his reputation as a raconteur that Marie Antoinette is said by an anonymous frequenter of the *Jardin Anglais* to have listened enraptured to his account of having slain a peasant whose singularily odiferous nature had offended his olfactory senses...

It is, of course, a grotesque misrepresentation, a mere tatter's garnish, to suggest that Marie Antoinette, news of the indigency of the populace having reached her royal ear, should unthinkingly have proposed that her multitudinous subjects should, as the historical primers of a later century had it, "eat cake". Whatever comestibles she may have thought appropriate for satisfying the culinary requirements of her people — whether grouse, caviar or *pâté de fois gras* — it can be confidently asserted that "cake" was not among them.

It was at this point that her eye, ever restless in its sequestration, fell upon the Duc de Doremi, whose shapely calves had long excited the ladies of the royal bedchamber. In fact, it was in this elegantly furnished rendezvous on the morning of 17th December that... (*continues for a further 500 pages*)

Sentimental journey-man

One For My Baby
Tony Parsons
(HarperCollins, £16.99)

THIS is Tony Parsons' new novel, the successor to his mega-selling *Man and Boy*, and it is crammed with full-frontal epigrammatic assaults on life's innate complexity: *Christmas trees are a bit like relationships. The real thing is certainly more beautiful, but it's just too much fuss..,*

The same could be said about books, particularly about the ever-expanding literary category of novels by tabloid journalists. (Think Littlejohn, Bushell and, up a bit to the left, Parsons.)

One For My Baby goes like this. Hero Alfie is back from the Far East, where his marriage has been cut short by the death of his lovely wife Rose. Consolation is provided by the language school where he works, the roost of some very shaggable birds (Vanessa, Yumi, Olga and so on). But surprise, surprise, all this laddish fantasy activity turns out to be meaningless at some, you know, deeper level.

Meanwhile, Alfie's Mum and Dad are having their own probs. Dad, sports journo turned best-selling East End memorialist, gets caught being pleasured by the au pair in full view of a hundred surprise party guests and quits the family domicile. There's a chirpy, dying, cockernee man, an inscrutable Chinese Tai Chi instructor and a luvverly gel called Jackie — a one-parent family who wants to better herself via education — and everything is splendidly set up for Alfie's redemption. Son, grandson, husband — rest assured, the boy will shape up.

Serious stuff, you see? *Issues*. Unfortunately, though his heart's in the right place, our Tone can't hack it. Never mind the light but unremitting drizzle of cliché that dampens every sentence, never mind the epigrammatic frenzy; what drags this gleaming opus down below the waterline is a kind of emotional tabloiding. Give a character a sight of a key human experience and, yup, he or she greets it in exactly the same flaring, improbable key as the soap monsters.

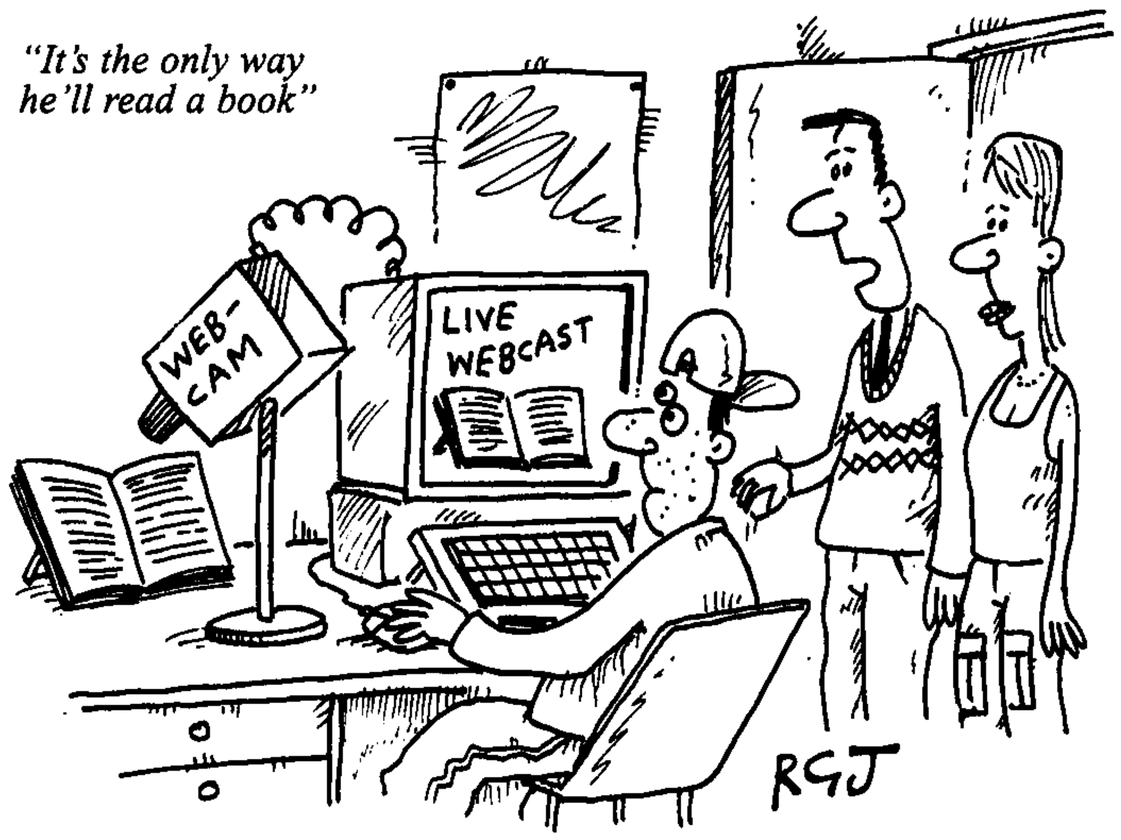
"This is madness, Dad" (Dad has just gone off with the totty). "You know what your problem is, Alfie? You think you're the only person that anything bad ever happened to?" (Jackie on Alfie's grief.) And so it goes on. And on.

This isn't to say that *One For My Baby* isn't short on humour, albeit of the unintentional kind. There are the trademark descriptions that don't describe (Japanese girls with "shimmering, iridescent hair", distinguished by their, um, "delicate Japanese beauty"), the occasional flash bits and the carefully seeded highbrow references, a propos of Jackie's A level English exam ("This Lovelace bloke" etc).

Only once does anything really happen, down beneath the plastic coatings and the saccharin veneers, and that's when the old nan dies. Parsons watched something like this, you feel, and it really hit him. The rest is a series of dismal variations on "We've all got our troubles but ain't life grand". Alfie on his students? "I like their optimism, their youth, the way their lives are not yet set in stone." Alfie out clubbing? "And it's great. It's not like when I was twenty." Alfie and family celebrating Chinese New Year at the Tai Chi instructor's restaurant? "We stand on the street looking at this small miracle on this busy London road."

Somehow it's this that irks more than anything, more than the emotional paint-by-numbers and the cut-price platitudes. Irritating youthful arrogance — Mr Parson's forte for the first 20 years of his career — has turned into equally irritating middle-aged sentimentalising.

"It's the only way he'll read a book"



Books & Bookmen

■ ONE of the better pieces of news stemming from John Blake's purchase of Metro (see *Eyes passim*) is that one of the authors he has inherited is Tania Farrell Yelland, wife of the *Sun*'s editor David Yelland.

Flakey Blakey describes her in *UK Press Gazette* as "very gentle and much loved" and her book on breast cancer, *All Woman*, as "very moving". However, despite such emollient words, Tania's husband is still livid with Blake for passing the serial rights for ex-Gonad Garry Bushell's novel *The Face* to the *Daily Star* free of charge after the *Sun* opted to get behind Littlejohn's screed (published by HarpicCollins — prop: R. Murdoch) instead.

Yelland can't afford to gripe too much, though. His wife had pledged her royalties to a breast cancer charity, but Metro being Metro, no royalties came through. So, Blake's rescue offer, however misguided it may turn out to be, is the only hope that the charity will see any money from the book.

■ ANOTHER of Blakey's recent acquisitions is the autobiography of former MP Teresa Gorman. The big question is which of his imprints will carry the ramblings of she with the tattooed eyebrows and robust views?

Will the old bruiser's memoirs appear under the Blake name itself, joining books about violent criminals such as *The Guv'nor* by Lenny McLean and *Hard Bastards* by Kate Kray? Or will it be Metro, home to much bankrupt stock? The smart money is on Richard Cohen Books, the relatively upmarket non-fiction imprint that Blake picked up as part of the Metro deal. Given that the company was founded by the amanuensis of her former Tory colleague Lord Archole, Gorblimey should feel relatively at home.

'Bookworm'

Pseuds Corner

The sculpture [Rachel Whiteread's Monument for Trafalgar Square] declares only itself, and if it is a monument, it commemorates the difference between dumb physicality and the aspirations of art. It is like the first stuttering levels of Constantin Brancusi's 1937 Endless Column in Romania, a plangent image of the metaphorical possibilities of repetition and endlessness.

Brancusi's work was about ascent, bounded only by human imagination and the laws of gravity. Whiteread's Monument is a kind of mirror of our longing for permanence... This is a sculpture that aspires to the condition of ice, of the ungraspable. It is a sculpture that both wants to declare itself and to disappear.

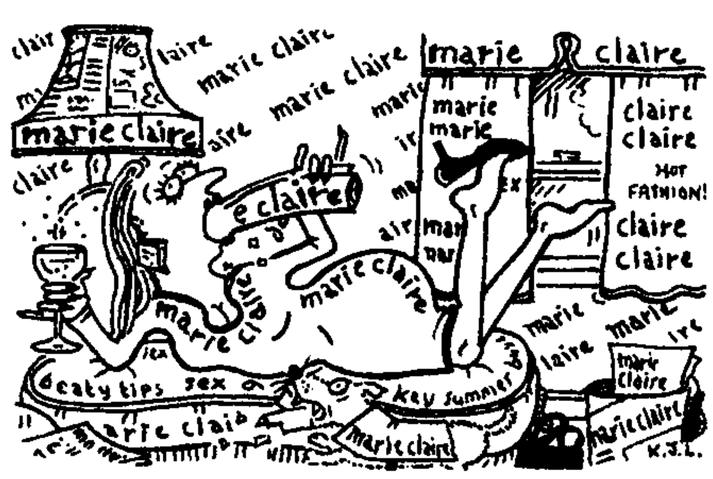
ADRIAN SEARLE
Guardian

Bodies
Exploring Fluid Boundaries
Robyn Longhurst, University of Waikato, NZ

This book revolves around three case studies – pregnant bodies in public places, men's bodies in domestic toilets and bathrooms, managers' bodies in Central Business Districts. The pregnant body threatens to expel matter from inside. It is often described as 'ugly' or as 'matter out of place'. Geographers have ignored men's bodies in domestic toilets and bathrooms because these places are abject sights/sites where bodily boundaries are broken and then made solid again. Female and male managers wear tailored, dark coloured business suits, that give the appearance of a body which is impervious to leakage and penetration.

The case studies illustrate that bodies and spaces are socially constructed and yet have an undeniable materiality and fluidity. Ignoring the everyday materiality of bodies that 'leak' and 'seep' is not a harmless omission, rather it contains a political imperative that helps keep masculinism intact.

Routledge publishers catalogue



It's hard to imagine a world without Marie Claire these days.

CAROLINE ROUX
The Guardian

In Athens on Wednesday night [David] Beckham was a poetic thing to see. He didn't have to be scoring a goal to look poetic. He looked poetic just trapping a lobbed ball with his chest, as if rising to sacrifice himself by intercepting a meteorite. He looked poetic just standing there, while the missiles sportingly thrown by the Greek fans bounced around him. He looked too poetic to be the incarnation of a socio-political trend, but he was.

CLIVE JAMES
Independent

Franko B is an internationally acclaimed artist who works with his naked, bleeding body, challenging the audience to confront their ideas of beauty, attempting to make the unbearable bearable. *I Miss You*, Franko's performance that opened Fierce! 2000, was the highlight of the festival. A total sell-out, a packed venue watched in amazed and emotional silence as he walked naked and bleeding down a canvas catwalk.

For 2001, Franko presents *Oh Lover Boy* – a new live art piece examining images of painting whilst simultaneously making a painting, using the body as a canvas. The beauty, dignity and honesty of the image of Franko's body lying on a raised metal bed bleeding onto a canvass below, describes the human condition in its most raw, exposed and essential state.

Fierce 2001 programme

CONTRIBUTORS: Bernard Ineichen, Richard Keeling, Andrew Nickson, Michael Grosvenor Myer, Andrew Tarpey

£10 paid for entries

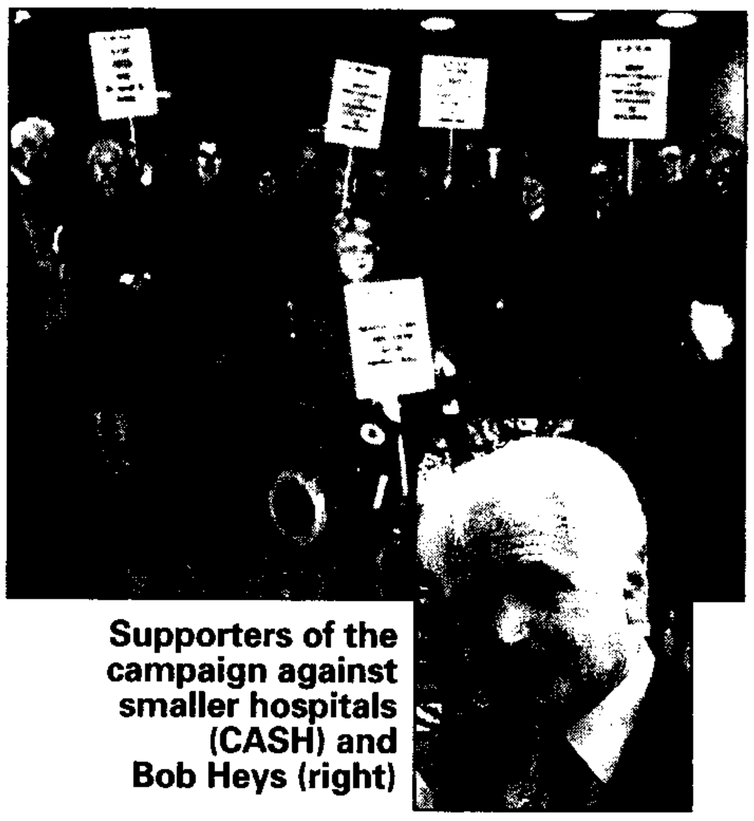
IN THE BACK

Why CASH is all about money

ALICE MAHON, left-wing Labour MP for Halifax, had better watch out. Something is happening in the town that seems uncannily similar to what went on at Wyre Forest, where a campaign to save Kidderminster Hospital resulted in the election last month by a vast majority of the retired consultant who led the Health Concern campaign. Labour candidate David Lock was utterly humiliated (see last *Eye*).

In Halifax, for the last four years a retired consultant in gynaecology and obstetrics, Dr Bob Heys, has chaired a campaign group called CASH, Campaign Against Smaller Hospitals. Unlike Kidderminster, Halifax does not stand to lose almost all its hospital. The new Halifax hospital has just been opened – but there are several strikingly similar circumstances to those in Wyre Forest.

The first is that the new hospital has many fewer beds than the three it replaces. A report in the *British Medical Journal* in the spring of 1997



Supporters of the campaign against smaller hospitals (CASH) and Bob Heys (right)

showed a remarkable 42 percent decline in acute hospital beds in Calderdale — from 929 in June 1996 to 553.

Like everything else in the public service built under "new" Labour, the new hospital is the product of a private finance initiative (PFI), whereby a private contractor led by the building firm Bovis assumes control of the planning and financing of the scheme, and eventually gets to own the new hospital. The peculiar attraction of this is that it is more expensive than the old NHS method and leads to hospitals with fewer beds.

CASH was formed to protest against the scheme and has been increasingly supported by the people of Halifax and senior hospital staff who in the bad old days of public enterprise were regularly consulted about hospital plans but are now, under private enterprise, simply told what has been decided and ordered to get on with it.

Now, only weeks after the hospital opened, Dr Heys tells the *Eye* of a series of "major sometimes dangerous design faults and service breakdowns" including:

- The absence of shelter for ambulances at the main accident and emergency entrance to the hospital, where huge queues of patients have to abandon their stranded ambulances and make their way across 50 or 60 unsheltered yards.
- The explosive shattering of a glass awning over the hospital entrance — alarmingly attributed by the authorities to hot weather.
- Power breakdowns resulting in failure of life support respirators in intensive care, made worse by the difficulties encountered in starting up a reserve generator.
- A failure of autoclaving facilities, leading to the transfer of instruments for sterilisation at the old Royal Infirmary.
- Bed shortages, resulting in the cancellation of listed admissions.
- Even more disgusting food than previously. The food is cooked in Manchester and transported from there.

These flaws have been rather grudgingly publicised in the local press, and have led to more support for CASH. What worries Alice Mahon, who, like so many Labour MPs was a vociferous opponent of PFI until it was adopted wholesale by "new" Labour, is that CASH might follow Health Concern and take more direct political action.

NURSING A COMPLAINT

WHAT happened to Neil Askew on new year's eve 1996 was every parent's nightmare. The 11 year old was sick, complaining of a violent headache and had a purple rash on his foot and arms: classic symptoms of meningitis.

He collapsed in the A&E department of Whipps Cross Hospital in east London after waiting in vain for nearly four hours to see a doctor. He later died in a specialist unit at St Mary's Hospital on the other side of the capital from meningococcal meningitis.

Now, more than four years later, his parents Chris and Linda Askew are still battling with the health service investigation and complaints procedures to find out exactly what went wrong – despite one internal and two external inquiries.

The couple believe that despite the eventual findings of failure against the hospital (undue delay, lack of communication, inadequate staff and training, and a "confused" internal inquiry), they have still not had access to all the relevant documents and material and that a cover-up continues. They are currently challenging in the high court the secrecy of the UKCC, the nurses' governing body, which has been investigating their complaint about the nurse who was managing A&E that day.

The UKCC's preliminary proceedings committee recently decided that the nurse's actions that day did not amount to misconduct and threw out the complaint. But the Askews discovered that the committee had not spoken to the nurse. "She just might have put her hands up and said: 'Yes, mistakes were made that day and this is what they were'," said Mr Askew. Instead the committee relied on documents and information furnished by the hospital and the Askews wanted to know exactly what that information was, so that they might comment upon it or challenge it.

That they are suspicious is not surprising. In the months following Neil's death, they discovered that they – and indeed the first two inquiries – had been misled over at least one key issue. The hospital had initially maintained that when Neil's GP telephoned the hospital to alert them to the child's imminent arrival in A&E he had not mentioned a rash or meningitis. Had he done so more action would have been taken.

But a hospital green form admissions document made out after the GP's phone call, and unearthed 18 months later by the Askews, clearly mentioned "rash" as well as headache. The health service ombudsman was later to find that the hospital had been told about the rash but did not take adequate or appropriate action – either by instructing the GP to give penicillin immediately or by ensuring a "more timely assessment and treatment in arrival at A&E".

Because of the history of misinformation, the family wrote to the UKCC asking that they be able to examine and comment upon any information it obtained so that they might correct inaccuracies. Despite reassurances, the family did not obtain full disclosure and are to argue in the high court that there had been breach of both natural justice and their rights under human rights legislation. The UKCC declined to comment as the matter "in is the hands of our lawyers".

The family have also been granted an inquest, although no date has been fixed, and have issued proceedings against Forest Healthcare Trust, then responsible for the hospital. It admits negligence but denies any delay contributed to Neil's death.

Whipps Cross hospital said: "This is a sad case in which the trust continues to offer its condolences to Mr and Mrs Askew and to apologise most sincerely for the failures in our service that were identified by the independent review and the ombudsman." It said it had taken action to implement the recommendations within the reports and was now cooperating with the coroner's office.

Said Mr Askew: "We have gone to the courts as a last resort. The writ against the hospital is not about damages – if we win the money will go straight to St Mary's hospital, which did its best for Neil. It is about finding out exactly what happened. It is about making hospitals accountable and ensuring procedures are in place to stop it happening to someone else. We will never know for sure whether prompt medical attention would have saved Neil – but what we know is that he was not given the chance."

HAKLUYT WATCH

WHO exactly is Michael Maclay, director of Hakluyt, the mysterious "intelligence agency" exposed by the *Sunday Times* (17 June) as an employer of spies in the green and peace movements?

Mr Maclay is an informative chap. He told the *Sunday Times*: "We don't ever talk about anything we do. We never go into details about what we may or may not be doing."

An ignorant observer might imagine that Maclay has an aversion to journalists. But not so. When he left the foreign office in the mid-1980s he teamed up with the celebrated team of "mission to explain" journalists at London Weekend Television under John Birt, later-director general of the BBC, and Peter Mandelson, later Labour's media specialist and twice-sacked cabinet minister.

While at London Weekend Maclay helped Mandelson's friend David (now Lord) Lipsey set up the *Sunday Correspondent* to rival the *Observer*. Together with Mandelson and Lipsey, Maclay was an early member of the British American Project to encourage members of "the successor generation" — the best and the brightest in both countries (see *Eyes* 929, 954, 960, 963, 1011). Another former BAP member was Liz (now Baroness) Symons, a star in the Blair government, and wife of Phil Bassett, Blair's key aide at Number 10.

The fact that Maclay's Hakluyt (bizarrely named after a geographer) sought and paid for information from Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth which would be useful to its clients in the boardroom of BP will not have come as a surprise to top BP executive and founding treasurer of the British American Project, Nick Butler. Butler is well known to *Eye* readers as one of "new" Labour's favourite big businessmen. For several years his wife ran the press office at the Blairite think tank IPPR, whose talkative director Matthew Taylor is another close friend of Michael Maclay.

Friends of Michael Maclay: Lord Lipsey, John Birt and Peter Mandelson

LEGAL AID IS AN ASS

SOME £30,000 of public money has been spent in legal costs in the tragic case of former Gulf war soldier John Callaghan. But because his widow, Amanda, a dental nurse, has been promoted, and because she is spending less on herself and is the beneficiary of a small widow's pension, legal aid has been withdrawn, and the case will have to be abandoned.

John Callaghan enlisted in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1987 and took part in the Gulf War in 1990. He was exposed in the Gulf to nerve gas and biological weapons and, on one occasion, when the gas alarm sounded, could not scramble into his protective suit in time.

Suffering from profound mental and physical illness, he left the army and set up a small auto-electrical business which collapsed. In 1995, he was involved in a small and hopeless attempt to sell illegal amphetamines. He was arrested and taken to Wigan where he was classified a suicide risk. In January he was sent to Strangeways prison on remand.

In February 1996 he was examined by D.A. Jones, consultant psychiatrist at Ty Gwyn in Llandudno, a specialised treatment facility for traumatised ex-servicemen. Dr Jones concluded that the young man was "of previously good personality and capacities, and an obviously good worker with good potential for a career". Mainly because of his experiences in the Gulf, however, he had become ill and "was in serious risk of self harm". As a result of this report, John Callaghan was swiftly moved to Ty Gwyn where for the first time since he became ill he was properly looked after and made good progress.

John Callaghan

On 15 April 1996 he was taken to Bolton crown court where he and a friend pleaded guilty to selling amphetamines. The judge described the cases as "dreadfully sad". He observed that John Callaghan had been "suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder" and had been receiving treatment at Ty Gwyn. He sentenced both men to two years in prison, but instead of sending John back to Ty Gwyn, as he could have done, the judge expressed the "hope that you will immediately be dealt with under section 48 of the mental health act". In the court was Dr Jones from Ty Gwyn, who wrote an urgent report to the principal medical officer at Strangeways: "I am very concerned about this young ex-serviceman," he stressed. "He has been a severe suicide risk and during his period in my care he has required intensely close nursing. He suffers severe post-traumatic stress disorder compounded with the physical malaise common to many veterans suffering from the so-called 'Gulf Syndrome'."

Dr Jones specifically warned against the return of the young man to prison, but back to Strangeways he went. He was examined several times by medical staff there, but no attempt was made to get him back to Ty Gwyn or any other specialist medical facility. Three weeks after being sent back to prison he was found dead in his cell, hanged by his shoe laces.

Strongly supported by John's parents, and by their MP Dave Watts, his widow sued the home office, alleging negligence. They got a positive legal opinion from barrister Dr Jonathan Richards. The opinion warned that the damages for the family would not be high, but insisted: "There are strong public interest arguments in support of further public funding of this claim. It is plainly a matter of public interest that proper standards of supervision should be provided in penal institutions." John Callaghan's father says: "We were never interested in money. We just wanted an explanation and an apology."

The case proceeded. A trial date was fixed for December at the London county court. Then Amanda Callaghan was promoted and got a pay rise of about £160 a month. She also started to receive a pension bought by her late husband. These changes in her income were reported to the legal service commission, who noticed that they took her above the limit at which legal aid is available. Legal aid was cut off, and her lawyers sadly announced that they could not afford to take the matter further.

MMR: THE MYTHING LINK

LAST WEEK newspapers again announced that "fresh evidence" had disproved any link between MMR, the triple measles, mumps and rubella vaccine, and autism. But the evidence was not that fresh and did not add to the debate much either way.

The study, published in *Vaccine* magazine, was a re-analysis of the north London study (*Eyes passim*) – which was one of the first to reveal the huge increase in the numbers of autistic children.

The *Eye* has already questioned the original paper's ability to prove the case one way or another. But far from overcoming any shortcomings, the second look at the data called "MMR and autism: Further evidence against a causal connection", arguably makes the case weaker.

The basic problem with the study, whatever way one analyses the results, is that it relies totally on doctors' records. So vaccination dates are accurate as are diagnosis dates for autism. But it can take months if not years of slow regression in a toddler before a diagnosis is finally made.

The researchers' attempt to accommodate this problem – by factoring in the date of first parental concern – is also taken from doctors and not directly from the parents. And it can be many weeks or months of slow change in behaviour and developmental regression before a parent actually consults a GP. As one parent of an autistic child told the *Eye*: "Ask a parent what the very first thing was that concerned them and it is likely to be something little – my son became a bit detached, not so chatty – that at first you tend to ignore." Most parents are looking for positive progress in their children – not problems.

So when the hundreds of families mounting the huge vaccine-damage test case come to the high court next year, they will maintain that the paper has little power to detect any meaningful effect.

One of the paper's co-authors was Dr Elizabeth Miller, head of immunisation at the government's Public Health Laboratory Service, who is a determined advocate for MMR. But she would be. Miller was one of the scientists involved in the first trial of MMR in the UK involving 10,000 children and which paved the way for its licence.

That study and other MMR trials have since been criticised by Andrew Wakefield, the doctor who first raised questions about the triple jab, and others as being "premature". In most cases there were no control groups and they only tracked vaccinated children for about three weeks after the jab – autism, gut disorder and other conditions affecting the nervous system would not be apparent for many months.

Interestingly the Word Health Organisation has recently chosen Dr Miller to lead an investigation into a possible link between vaccines that contain mercury and autism and similar disorders. (MMR does not contain the mercury-based preservative, thiomersal. But the suggestion from work, mainly in the US, is that potential damage from the build-up of toxic mercury in jabs like diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough in young babies' brains and bodies, disables the body's immune system to cope with the triple measles mumps and rubella vaccination).

Dr Miller is to analyse records from 500 GP practices to check for a link. The *Eye* believes these are the same computerised doctors' records currently being examined by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, which is examining a variety of potential triggers for autism – including MMR.

The problem that has already been identified with the GPs' databases is that again, while they provide accurate records of all vaccination and dates of acute illness and accidents, they are not good for dealing with the complexities of autistic-like disorders. And similarly, while it had been hoped that they would throw up children who had not been vaccinated and who could provide a "control group", there are insufficient numbers. Exactly the same problems were identified with the Miller and colleagues' north London MMR study.

CARRY ON TEACHING

EDUCATION secretary Estelle Morris, keen to deliver control of school finances into the hands of heads and governors, might pause to consider the cautionary tale of one Brian Lees, former magistrate and £66,000-a-year head of Glossopdale community school in Derbyshire.

Lees, who has gone to ground after spending tens of thousands of pounds of school funds on high-tech and sports goods for himself and his family, and wasting a further quarter of a million on unauthorised business ventures, looks likely to escape prosecution and could carry on teaching.

He was suspended in February last year after a Derbyshire county council audit. The subsequent report, which the *Eye* has seen, reveals not only misappropriation of funds and inappropriate conduct on a colossal scale, but also a staggering lack of monitoring and control. In all the school paid £38,528 for goods which were used to enhance the Lees family's lifestyle.

Under the heading "general financial mismanagement", Lees is accused of ordering inappropriate amounts of IT equipment for his own use at a time when IT resources in the school were limited due to lack of funding; failing to produce proper accounts for Talbot House school (one of two schools on the college's split site); allowing the sale of alcohol at functions at Talbot House without a liquor licence; and failing to declare the change of use of Talbot House to the local authority, thereby incurring a £50,000+ liability for unpaid rates. In all, Lees allegedly misspent £256,000 on Talbot House, in an attempt to move education into the conference/catering business.

After his suspension, Lees sold up in Glossop and moved to York and signed himself into Bootham Park General Hospital as a voluntary psychiatric day patient. The police prepared a file for the CPS but that body declined to proceed on the grounds of the former magistrate's unhelpful mental state.

The council was reluctant to press charges on such an embarrassing matter, while Lees's friends and co-optees on the governing body dragged their feet. Eventually charges were assembled in advance of a disciplinary hearing.

Lees has now offered to resign. Thus he would escape disciplinary proceedings and have access to his pension. He continues to draw his salary after 16 months of suspension, and looks set to walk away, his record intact.

And, elsewhere, a rogue head with a big budget and lazy governors could do exactly the same thing again.

You can contact Paul Foot on 020 7287 3183 or the In the Back team on 020 7437 4017

In the City

INDEPENDENT Insurance is one more example of two eternal City truths. If it sounds too good to be true it almost certainly is; and in the greedy City good bullshit will always baffle gullible brains.

During the 80s Polly Peck's Asil Nadir claimed to be able to make astronomic profits from low-tech oranges and lemons and cardboard boxes. Rivals said it was impossible. The City believed Nadir and lost more than £1bn. Polly Peck was a con facilitated by compliant accountants and directors. Nadir's rivals were right all along.

Most of the major casualties of the 70s and 80s bull markets involved similar "story stocks" dependent on the supposed magical, mystical genius of the big man who could turn dross into gold over and over again. "Changi Jim" Slater and "Gorgeous George" Walker were typical. More recently, there has been Carl Cushnie and his Versailles trade finance fantasy.

Independent's founder and resident dictator Michael Bright followed their and Nadir's well trodden path. Like them he now has the police and regulators in pursuit. Bright claimed to be able to make money where every other insurer was losing it. There was a great deal of impressive talk about avoiding risk, not chasing loss-making market share and loyal customers.

The truth was – as ever – very different. "Brighty" could no more walk on water than the man from the Pru or any other insurance suit. Independent would seem to have operated somewhat like a Ponzi investment scheme in which new premiums paid old claims.

So why was this not spotted? Insurance is a complex, specialised sphere. Its accounts are impenetrable to all but the expert and, Independent seems to suggest, even to some of those. There were insurance experts who spotted the trick, serious under-reserving against claims. But these warnings were drowned out by the cascade of analysts' hype and supportive press articles.

The *Financial Times* (see Street of Shame) was only one of those who fell for the Bright publicity machine spin orchestrated by financial PRs such as College Hill Associates. The *Daily* and *Sunday Torygraph* were avid fans. "One of the best run insurance companies", declared the Sunday while the daily described Independent as "small but pretty well perfectly formed" both as recently as March 1999. The *Independent* described its namesake as a "buy" in 1998.

The *Sunday Telegraph* and the *Sunday Times* in November 1998 had gobbled up Bright's feed that he was looking to take over the six-times bigger Guardian Royal Exchange. A laughable proposition which may well owe its conception to a plan to deal Independent out of a looming crisis by rolling it into a much bigger group where the losses could be lost and the risks absorbed by GRE's far larger reserves. Such deals have always been the planned saviour for acquisitive companies desperate to disguise or hide the truth while keeping the share price show on the road. The GRE failure may well have marked the last chance for "Brighty" as soon after the insurance cycle turned down, claims rose and the black hole began to appear.

Commentators were usually complimentary from the 1993 float onwards until the cash crisis emerged earlier this year. Certainly no newspaper picked up on the point about Independent's thin reserves for claims despite this being a criticism raised at the time of the flotation. Such comments were put down to malicious carping by jealous rivals and drowned out by a stock market performance which saw the now worthless shares rise by

more than 600 percent in five years. And anyway "Brighty" was colourful unlike those boring grey suits who ran the other insurance companies.

The story that's too good to be true. The one man band. The subservient board. The compliant auditors and actuaries. The fawning hacks. The sleeping regulators. It is all so depressingly familiar. Only the names ever change.

AS WITH Ernst & Young at Equitable Life, so KPMG is on an uncomfortable and probably very expensive hook at Independent Insurance. How the auditors failed to spot the unrecorded and under-provided for claims is likely to see KPMG on the receiving end of legal and regulatory action.

KPMG will undoubtedly seek to dump all the blame off on being deceived by the directors and/or relying on the assurances of actuaries Watson Wyatt. However, the amount of highly profitable consultancy work KPMG conducted for "Brighty" may have clouded judgements.

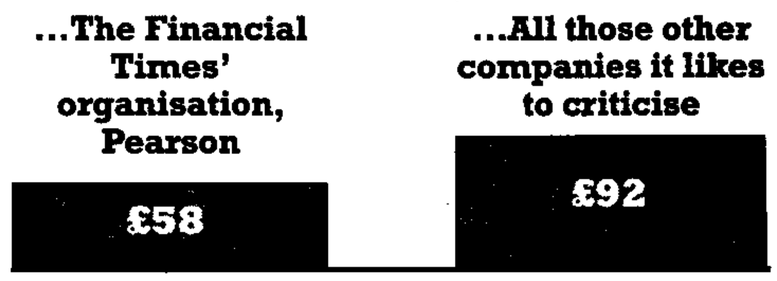
In three years KPMG was paid £600,000 for audit work but £900,000 for consultancy and other services. Audit work is often a loss leader designed to ensure the more profitable consultancy fees stay in-house. Too many audit questions and the consultancy fees go elsewhere leaving just the losses. KPMG will have a lot to explain and probably pay.

The Independent Insurance scandal comes at an unfortunate time for KPMG. It is also exposed over another similar accounting scandal, this time in Belgium. There, one-time stock market high-flyer Lernout & Hauspie Speech Products has crashed amid allegations of large scale accounting failure and fraud.

Stock Horror

FT? No Comment

Value today of £100 invested a year ago in...



KPMG provided auditors to the speech recognition software company which was once valued at more than £7bn but is now bankrupt with debts of more than £350m. Revenues were artificially boosted by some £200m between 1998 and last year. More than £70m from its Korean operation was completely fictitious. KPMG in London as well as Belgium and Holland is said to have been closely involved with L&H.

On the basis perhaps of getting its retribution in first, KPMG has sued the former L&H directors for providing false information and obstructing the audits. The Belgian trio who ran L&H (and who now face prosecution for insider-dealing, stock market manipulation and book-keeping violations) have countered by claiming that KPMG was not just auditor but also the consultant who advised on the company's procedures. Sound familiar?

BAD habits die hard, especially with bean counters. Earlier this month Arthur Andersen agreed to pay $7m, the largest fine ever imposed on an accountancy firm by the US Securities & Exchange Commission, for failing to stand up to the directors of Waste Management and allowing the company to inflate its profits over several years during the 90S by aggressive accounting techniques designed to ensure forecasts were met or exceeded and the share price kept going up.

Waste Management profits were exaggerated by a total of $1.4bn. Andersens repeatedly pleaded with the company to change its policies but when Waste Management directors refused the auditor still signed off the accounts as correct.

Andersens' top accountant at that time was Richard Maeselle. He was consulted and agreed with the do-nothing policy. Maeselle had been there before. He was John De Lorean's auditor. He ignored warnings about how De Lorean was running the Belfast sports car maker and personally spending British taxpayers' money. Maeselle kept what he knew from the British government, which ended up pumping some £80m into the failed venture. All of that happened a decade before Waste Management.

Andersen paid around £18m after fighting the British government for almost as many years so that legal costs made the payment purely Pyrrhic. Andersen has paid Waste Management shareholders £150m.

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE/RIGG

FARMING IS JUST ANOTHER IRRELEVANT OLD INDUSTRY— IT'S TIME IT GAVE WAY TO MODERN CALL CENTRES AND OFFICE PARKS...
...BUT...BUT WHO'S GOING TO PROVIDE FOOD ?
AN EXCELLENT POINT...
MEMO! OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR KWIKSNAK VENDING ARM...
93.

More Consignia Lookalikes

Counterpane Internet Security
Skillshare International
MTU Aero Engines
Peregrine Systems
Guinness Storehouse
Dataroam Mobile Internetworking
Just for teachers

FORMER BBC financial hack turned City PR and would-be Labour MP Sam Jaffa is on the receiving end of an embarrassing civil claim for plagiarism over a book on... frauds and scams!

The copyright action has been brought against Jaffa and his US publisher in New Jersey by journalists Peter Truell and Larry Gurwin, authors of a definitive book on the BCCI scandal.

Their action accuses Jaffa of "substantial and blatant word for word plagiarism" in "no fewer than 44 separate passages" in the 28-page chapter on BCCI for his 1997 book *Safe as Houses* (published in the US as *Great Financial Scandals*) from their 1992 book *False Profits*. Truell and Gurwin are seeking damages and costs potentially exceeding $200,000. Luckily for Jaffa the claim, filed in August last year, did not emerge during his unsuccessful campaign to be elected as MP for Eastleigh. He came third to the Lib Dems.

Jaffa is now in-house PR for City bankers UBS Warburg after four years in a similar role for Price Waterhouse (which audited BCCI after a fashion) before its merger with Coopers & Lybrand, which barely audited another character in the Jaffa book – pension pillager Robert Maxwell.

Doubtless this is all a misunderstanding which can easily be explained in court. For a PR man Jaffa is tight-lipped. He declined to discuss the action other than to deny any plagiarism and say it is all being handled by his lawyers.

THE phoney pharaoh Mohamed Fayed continues to dip into his offshore wallet to keep *Punch* afloat while waiting for the chance to splurge even more money on the *Express*.

Trading losses last year rose from £522,000 to £616,000 even though *Punch*'s sales fell from £321,000 to a massive £282,000. After administration charges, also up, the loss was an even more impressive £1.89m up from £1.7m the previous year. *Punch* has so far lost more than £13m. How this has been funded remains a mystery. No doubt one Fayed will explain to former Tory MP Charles Wardle who for some reason has replaced him as a *Punch* director.

'Slicker'

Number Crunchings

£1.4 million

■ PAY-OFF for former Railtrack chief executive Gerald Corbett

£1.4 million

■ COST of training 40 new train drivers

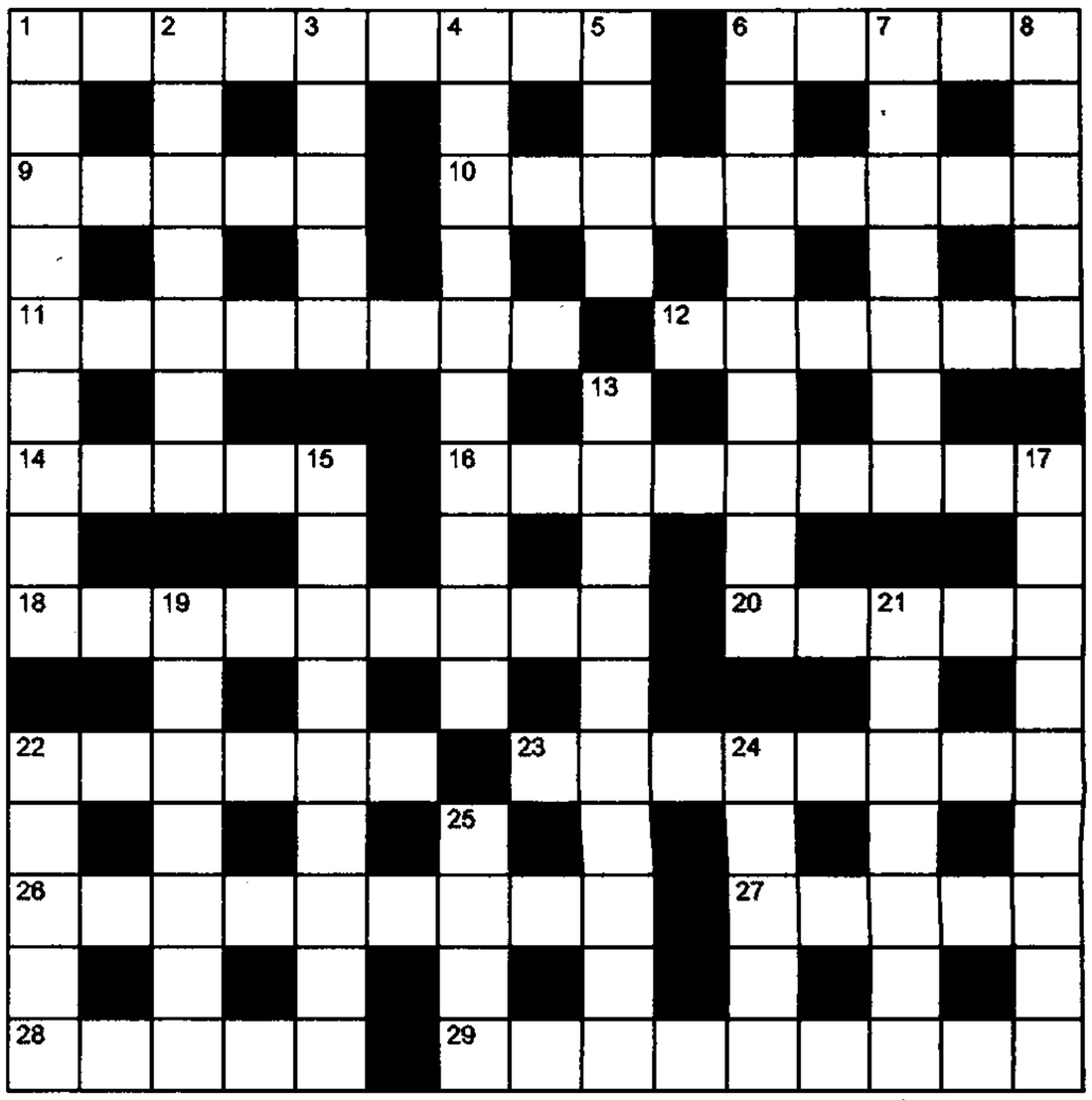
EYE CROSSWORD 186

by Cyclops

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 6 July 2001.

Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN.

185 winner STEPHEN WHITTAKER



ACROSS

1 Try to shag a party ... (4,1,4)
6 ... girl who's slim, sly, promiscuous boozer (5)
9 The nation's back in the grip of top right-wing alliance (5)
10 Stiff, right inside ... shrunk (9)
11 Snotty hack (news agency) is after bribe (6,2)
12 Rank, crappy products in South America (6)
14 Woman feasted topless, going on about Fanny (5)
16 Abominable Snowman's first two balls Thelma jiggled (9)
18 Ms Hurley a-flutter in the embrace of – wouldn't you say? – our Brenda (9)
20 Tiny demands snog and sex (5)
22 Copper in Home Counties got married and was sick (6)
23 Having an easy time briefly taking in sex partner (2,6)
26 Absolutely and repeatedly expose homosexuals (3,3,3)
27 Monarch nestling between tits, fly open (5)
28 Mark II ... (5)
29 ... millionaire, being ready, pants (9)

DOWN

1/22/4 Bush seized: at the complete mercy of another (4,2,3,5,3,7)
2 Crafty explorers skiving off (7)
3 Make a bad egg churchman piss about (5)
4 See 1dn.
5 Hill-billy's hard penis lacking depth (4)
6 Labour's bound to create a means of exploiting workers (5,4)
7 Piss-artist stuck in terrible hole in African enclave (7)
8 A place of purgatory and pointless summer fashion accessories (5)
13 The president's possibly not beneath being a scrubber (10)
15 Cook's range: large number wild topless women to northern Greek hero (9)
17 To go in for sex is something that inflames and makes you extremely loose (9)
19 Short length TV series: *Having it off with a sloth* (7)
21 Vat fiddle by Brenda, an arse-over-tip boozer (7)
22 See 1dn.
24 Apply pressure to member, toss extremely briskly (5)
25 Expression of disapproval on Monday for Blair we hear (4)

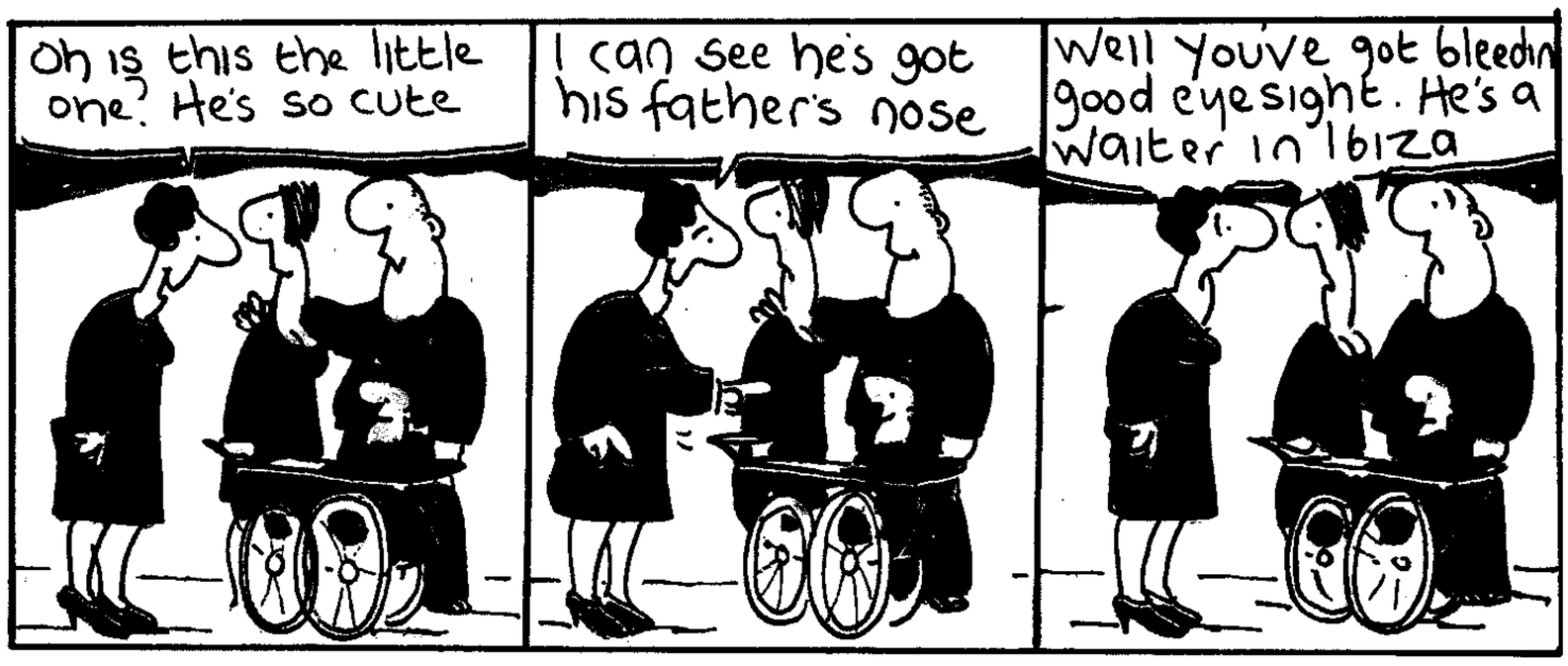
SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD 185

ACROSS: 1 Chasm 4 Oyster bed 9 A bit steep 10 Samoa 11 Eunuchs 12 Innards 13/26/15/19 Up shit creek without a paddle 18 Fixation 22 Impetus 24 Hustler 27 Tomboyish 28 Pilloried 29 End it.

DOWN: 1 Chateau 2 Alien 3 Masochist 4 Odessa 5 Syphilis 6 Essen 7 Bum around 8 Dead Sea 14 Sex appeal 16 Headstone 17 Rossetti 18 Fair cop 20 Earshot 21 Shamed 23 Tokyo 25 Laird.

Yobs

HUSBAND


Oh is this the little one? He's so cute
I can see he's got his father's nose
Well you've got bleedin good eyesight. He's a waiter in Ibiza

VALID TILL 30.06.2001

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Per 12 bottle case in bond ex VAT

Margaux

Margaux	*P.O.A.*
Rauzan-Ségla	318
d'Issan ❤	**216**
Giscours ❤	**204**
Cantenac-Brown	180
Marquis de Terme	153
Prieuré-Lichine	198
du Tertre	168
La Tour de Mons ❤	**132**

Saint-Julien

Lagrange	198
Saint-Pierre	222
Talbot ❤	**252**
Branaire-Ducru	204
Beychevelle	**240**
Gloria ❤	**180**

Pauillac

Lafite-Rothschild	*P.O.A.*
Latour	*P.O.A.*
Mouton Rothschild	*P.O.A.*
Pichon Baron	*P.O.A.*
Duhart-Milon-Rothschild	171
Haut-Batailley ❤	**180**
Grand-Puy Ducasse	150
Lynch-Bages ❤	***P.O.A.***
Lynch-Moussas	138
Haut-Bages Libéral	138
Clerc Milon	240
La Fleur Peyrabon	114
Pibran	135

Saint-Estèphe

Cos d'Estournel	*P.O.A.*
Montrose	*P.O.A.*
Calon-Ségur	228
Lafon-Rochet	168
Le Boscq	123
Haut-Marbuzet	198
Les Ormes de Pez ❤	**165**
Tronquoy-Lalande	102

Haut-Médoc

La Tour Carnet	129
Cantemerle ❤	**156**
Citran	102
Hourtin-Ducasse ❤	**66**
Lanessan	102
Peyrabon	75
Sénéjac	102
Sociando-Mallet	198

Médoc

Loudenne	78

Moulis

Chasse-Spleen	150
Poujeaux	147

Listrac

Fonréaud	75
Fourcas-Hosten	75

Pomerol

Le Bon Pasteur	432
Franc Maillet ❤	**144**
Gazin	372
Mazeyres	147
Petit Village	396
La Pointe	177
Clos René	162
de Sales ❤	**141**
Vieux Château Certan	*P.O.A.*
Vieux Maillet	177

Saint-Émilion Grand Cru

Cheval Blanc	*P.O.A.*
Canon	366
Château-Figeac	456
Clos Fourtet	351
La Gaffelière	360
L'Arrosée	312
La Couspaude	360
La Dominique	306
Larmande	171
Soutard	171
Troplong Mondot	360
Cros-Figeac	156
Fombrauge	132
Grand Corbin-Despagne ❤	**141**
Royiland ❤	**108**

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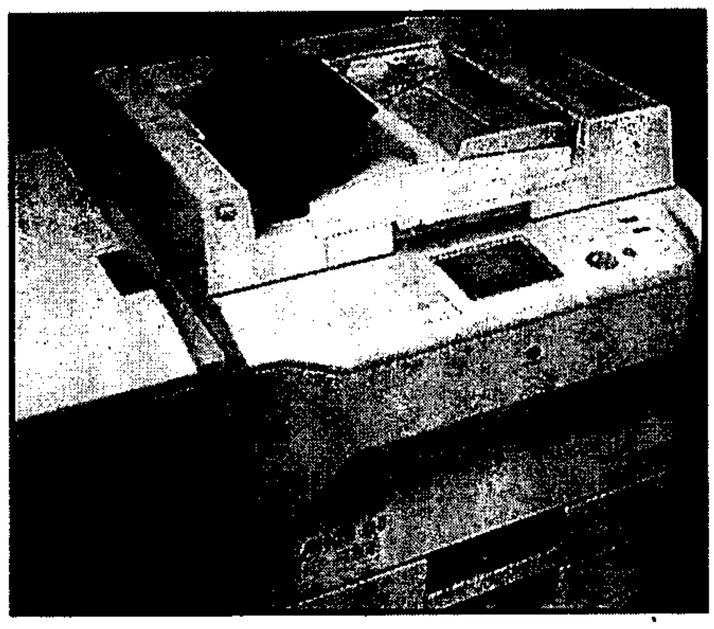

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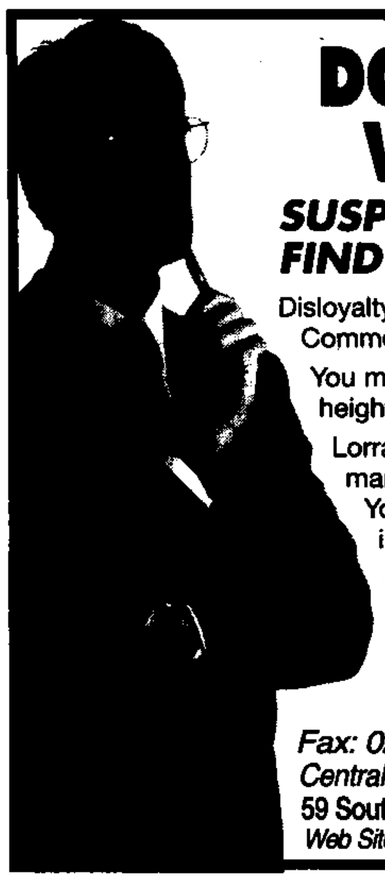

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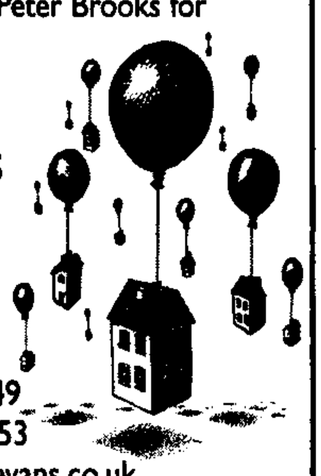

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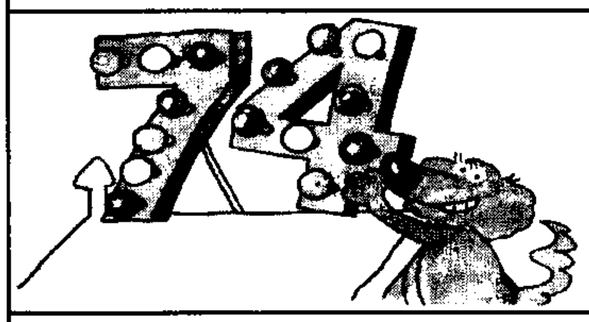

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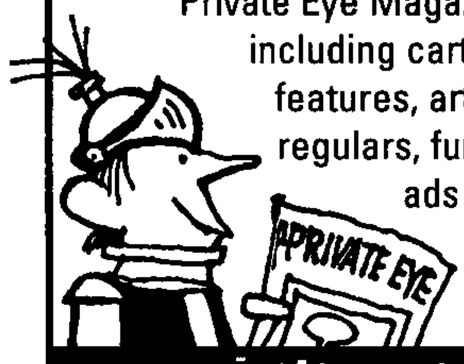

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42 YEAR PROF BLOKE, married but bored – WLTM lady in similar position to spice up life. London area. Contact: bloke42yr@hotmail.com

SUCCESSFUL BOOK PUBLISHER, 49. Handsome but married, seeks lady for discreet liaisons. Am sensitive, tactile, passionate generous. Box 1831.

GORGEOUS, SEXY WOMAN (31), needs spoiling. No pressure – just TLC given to right person. London Box 1631.

AMIABLE MALE, young-looking 60, occasionally assertive, wide interests including forays into wit culture, WLTM pleasant, unassertive female for discreet relationship. Photo appreciated. London Box 0831.

AAA – ATTRACTIVE, affectionate, articulate fortysomething lady sought by romantic unattached professional male. All replies acknowledged. Box 1331.

VERY GOOD LOOKING MALE, young 41, unattached, seeks easy-going female, 18-70, for casual affair. Box 0731.

MALE, 49, TALL, SLIM, semi-detached city professional. Outside interests essentially artistic, travel etc. – would like to meet a woman 35-45 with similar interests. I look forward to hearing from you. Box 0328.

NAÏVE MALE, 27, WLTM older woman 50+ with experience (married?) to explore the pleasurable, exciting side of life. Shy and yet willing to fulfil any fantasy. Please get in touch. Box 1729.

GENUINELY ATTRACTIVE single London based female would like to meet single man 35 45 for friendship and fun, maybe more. englishrose99uk@yahoo.co.uk

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TALL BLUE-EYED 40 yr old married man seeks honest bored attached woman for discreet mutual appreciation and laughs in the afternoon. cheeky_ize@hotmail.com

PRETTY BRUNETTE, Kent, needs pampering by interesting gent willing to travel. Tel 07931 987272.

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JUST REALISED HAVE LIVED WITH ALCOHOLIC FOR 22 YEARS. Need £30K to clear debts. Halifax 11-03-82, 00187154.

LADY MUST RETURN TO LONDON – needs to buy accommodation for security. Co-operative 08-93-00, 03170115.

DESPERATE WOMAN NEEDS £5000. Please help. Co-operative 08-93-00, 74353301.

RISEN FROM DEPRESSION. Light box and computer needed for sanity and study. Thanks. Barclays 20-05-57, 90708747.

DISTRAUGHT DAD needs urgent financial assistance to pay for child's ongoing private medical care. Bills are mounting – lease contact me soon. Box 1231.

PERCY GRAINGER ENTHUSIASTS: please help to fund my MPhil research. Details: shallow_brown@hotmail.com

STUDENT NURSE with young daughter and crippling debts approaching wits end. Please help. Sainsburys: Sort 12-60-09, Account 07903196.

WRITER WOULD greatly appreciate new/used computer. Can pay £50. 020 8374 3924.

WE ARE PLEASED TO REPORT, that as a result of the new style of lay-out we are able to include EYE NEED ads previously on our waiting list.

PLEASE HELP – (MY BANK GETTING RICHER!) – by helping busy working parent pay off her credit card bills. Lloyds/TSB 77-30-15, Account number 81103560.

INNOVATOR NEEDS £10,000 for SMART-DTI award. HSBC 40-47-31 82266180 solarsight@another.com

NEED MONEY FAST. Please help. No one to turn to – desperate. Box 0331.

PLEASE HELP WITH COSTS of new roof. £8000 needed. Any help much appreciated. Barclays 50728985, sort code 20-27-17.

TALENTED BUT BROKE theatre company desperately needs funds to get to EDINBURGH FESTIVAL. Lloyds/TSB Bond Street, 0005540, Sort Code 30-96-24. Short & Girlie Theatre Company.

PLEASE HELP NURSE heavily in debt struggling with rent and payments on car. Lloyds/TSB 0487187, Sort Code 30-99-98. Thank you.

MAN, 46, SERIOUSLY ILL, needs urgent financial help. Cannot work for 6 months. Thanks with love. Natwest 60-07-33, Account 68303726.

MEDICAL STUDENT wants to use his skills TO SAVE LIVES but doesn't know who to turn to for help paying off college debts. Could you? Box 0231.

INTELLIGENT ASYLUM APPLICANT, worked hard to attain A-levels, place at top UK university, but has no LEA grant. Desperately/urgently needs £20K for 3-year degree. Please Help. Box 0531.

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY technology seeks angel / venture philanthropist. The prospects for world-wide growth are excellent but we need to overcome initial barriers – info@rw-a.co.uk

SINGLE MOTHER victim of domestic violence needs funds to enable her to relocate to secure a safe, peaceful new future. Any donations sincerely appreciated. First Direct 40-47-87, account 82516306.

MUM DESPERATE FOR HELP to make sure very intelligent son can continue with expensive schooling he deserves. Box 2131.

VOLUNTARY CHARITY WORKER without family or funds desperately needs £8000 for studying. Abbey National 09-01-26, Account 25505622. Will repay when possible. Please help.

GRADUATE DROWNING IN DEBT urgently needs £10,000 to escape downward spiral into homelessness. Natwest 52-10-46, 80339360.

YOUNG COUPLE – both crippled with ME/CFS – need treatment. Please help. Lloyds 30-92-89, 1028570.

MAJOR/MINOR DONATIONS needed 4 begging young rocker, 2 modernise his election campaign into the hedonistic world of pop. 11-08-70, 00154294 – Bobby_boy7@hotmail.com

STUDENT CANNOT GRADUATE until university is paid £5000 debt. Please help! Barclays 20-71-06, account 60472549.

£5000 WOULD BE A HUGE HELP. Thankyou. HSBC 40-26-10 21378856

FINANCIAL HELP REQUIRED for start up of business support company. Any help much appreciated. First Direct 40-47-49 80994596.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS therapy centre's vital £25,000 annual FUND-RAISING EVENT CANCELLED due to Foot and Mouth. Please help us. Many thanks! 40-47-19, 11205412.

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DOCTORAL STUDENT desperately trying to raise £40K to complete medical course. Please help me to help others. Barclays 20-99-40 40897779.

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50P PER READER to help finish education. Lloyds 30-92-38, 7186516.

JUST ADOPTED BEAUTIFUL SON – please help us clear debts from unsuccessful IVS as struggling to make ends meet. Thank you. First Direct 40-47-83, 22357690.

SINGLE MUM NEEDS £9000 to clear debt and return to her children. In name Jesus Christ please help. Barclays 20-98-74, 10096113.

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POLITICALLY INCORRECT anthropologist needs funding for magnum opus. Barclays 20-11-39, 50382280.

DESPERATE TO SAVE FAMILY HOME. £45,000 required to clear debts left by former wife. 12-01-25, 01100294.

PLEASE HELP THE STROKE ASSOCIATION. Remember – anyone can be affected. If you require more information please call us on 0845 30 33 100.

STUDENT IN NEED – 30-16-26, 00297218.

SMALL PRIVATE ART COLLEGE in North Cyprus requires investment A sure loser maybe. Box 2531.

PLEASE HELP DESPERATE WOMAN left destitute by ex partner. Halifax 11-06-10, 00006242. Thank you.

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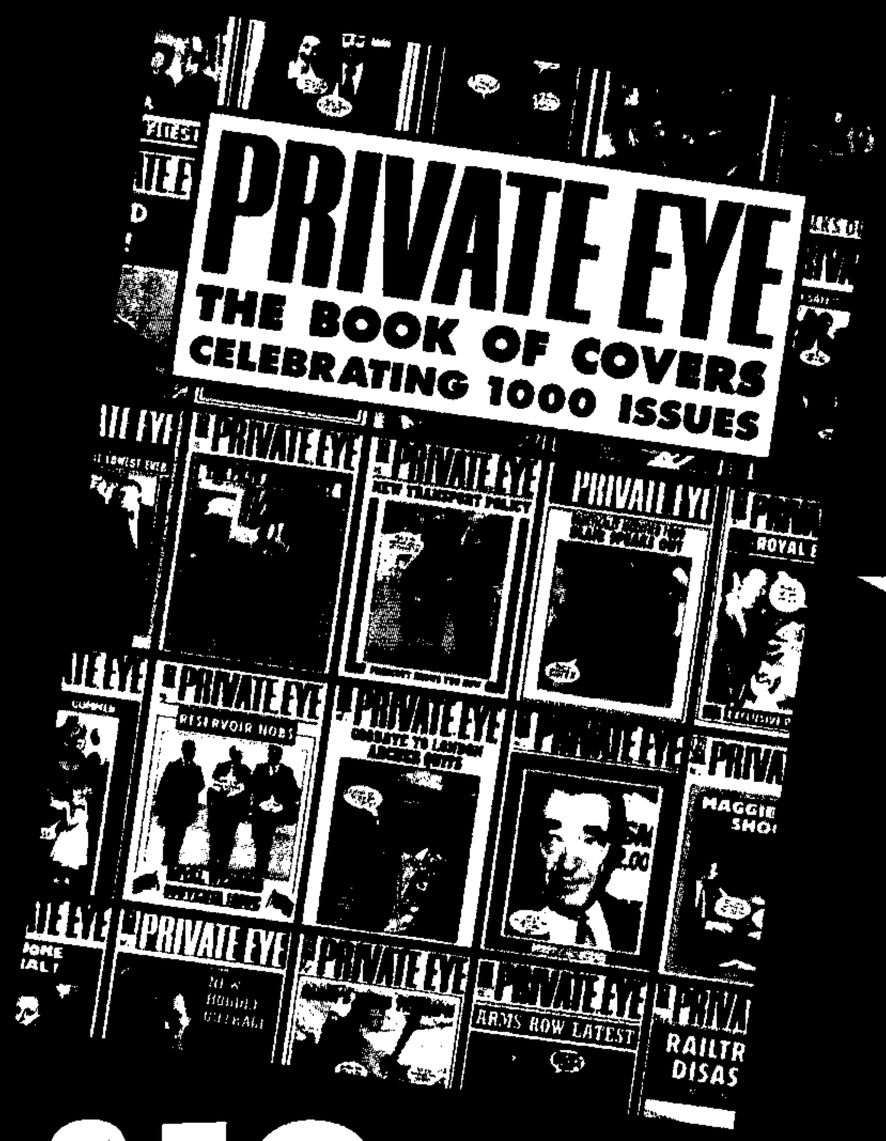

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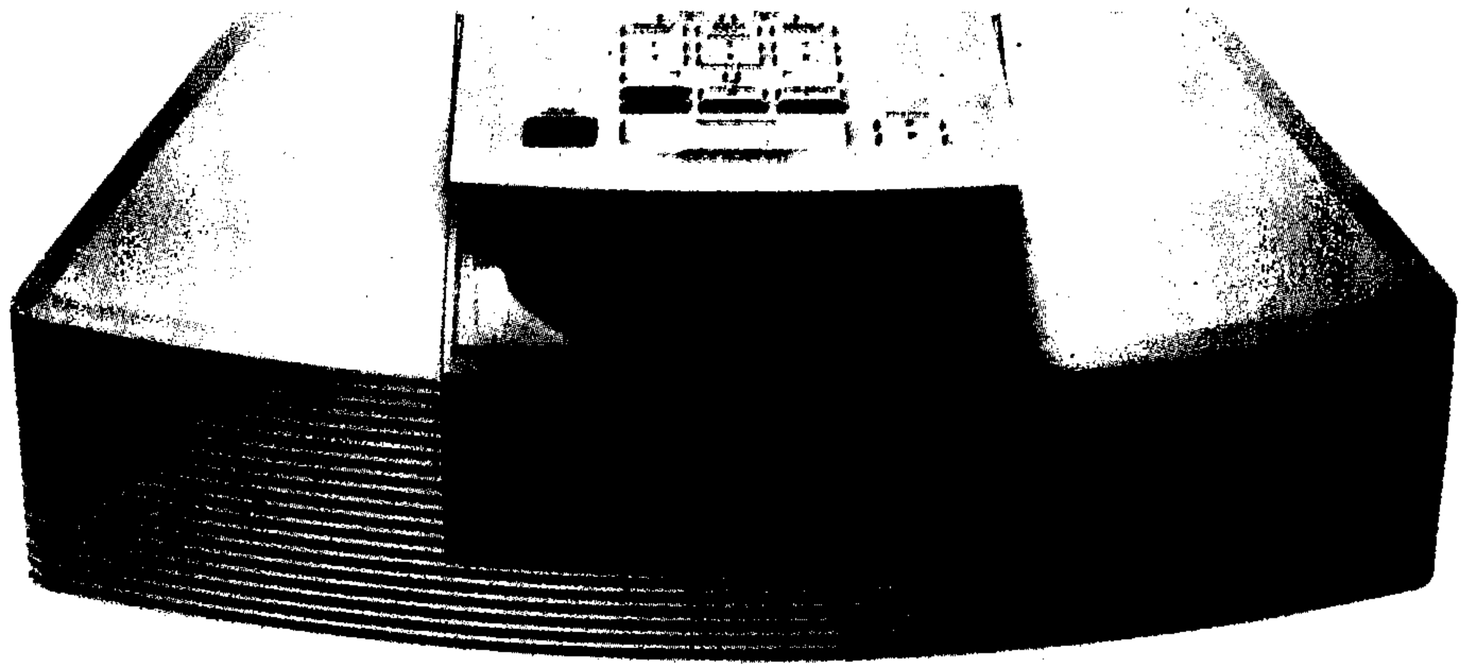

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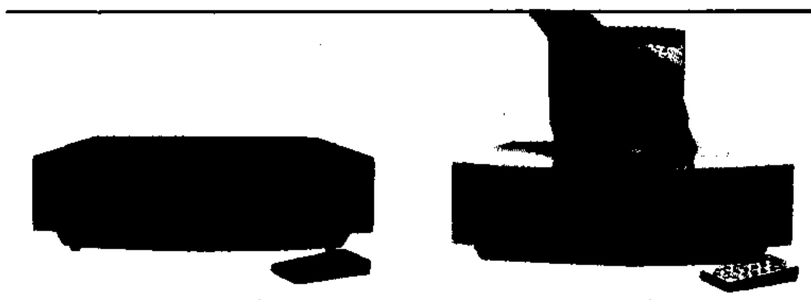

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